

## Farm system funnels students to national sports media

One measure of any university is how well it prepares students for success in their professions. By that standard the CU Sports Information Office has established an impressive track record.

Under the guidance of Dave Plati (Jour'82), associate athletic director for sports information, and such predecessors as Fred Casotti (Jour'49), Mike Moran, Tim Simmons and Steve Hatchell (Jour'70), students have gained real-world experience working in sports information, later landing coveted jobs in sports.

"I learned the ins and outs of the profession when I was a student assistant under Mike Moran and Tim Simmons — real professional mentors," Plati says. "The lessons I learned and experiences I had as a student were invaluable. For those students who work hard and want to advance, I feel I owe them the same opportunities."

And many have taken advantage of the training. In sports media former students in the Sports Information Office have become producers, anchors and reporters with the networks of ESPN (Chris Fowler,

Jour'85), CNN (Patricia Logan, Jour'82) and NBC (Jim Gray, Jour'82). Those who have entered the print media include *Sports Illustrated's* Doug Looney (Jour'63) and Jody Woodman (Jour'04). Colorado newspapers featuring Buff sports writers include the *Rocky Mountain News* (Dave Nelson, Jour'57), the *Denver Post* (Sean Kelly, Jour, PolSci '99), the *Longmont Times-Call* (Patrick Ridgell, Comm'91, and Jeff Fleischman, Jour'95, MEdu'01) and the *Boulder Daily Camera* (Craig Harper, Jour'70, and Pam Weddig, Jour'92).

Sports information alumni also have shaped the administration, public relations or media relations offices of the Big 12 Conference (Hatch-

ell), the U.S. Ski Team (John Dakin, Hist'75, Jour'79), Oklahoma State (Mike Strauss, Jour'87), the Western Athletic Conference and San Diego State (Lisa Vad, Jour'92), Long Beach State University (Chris DeConna, Comm'00), the Colorado School of Mines (Kacey Kingry, Jour'00), the University of San Francisco (Jennifer Engstrom, Comm'92), Chapman College (Jon Wexler, Jour'90), and, of course, the University of Colorado (Ollie Kirkpatrick, Jour'95, and Lindsay Anhold Lew, MJour'98).

Professional sports? Plati's former student assistants have been hired by the Colorado Avalanche (Damen Zier, Jour'93, and Michelle Resnick, Jour'03), the Colorado Rockies (Brendan McNicholas, Comm'00), the Green Bay Packers (Zak Gilbert, Jour'97), the Denver Broncos (Tucker Gilmore, Comm'04) and the Baltimore Ravens (Patrick Gleason, Comm'04).

Across the nation CU graduates attribute their successes to the education and training they received during their college years — a great tribute to CU.

—Tom Gleason (Comm'73)



CASEY A. CASS

**Sports information director Dave Plati (Jour'82), seated, works with another generation of aspiring sports media devotees in his office in the Balch Fieldhouse Annex. Standing are Erich Schubert, a graduate journalism student and Megan Buckley, a sophomore studying broadcast production.**



**The men's cross country team celebrates its third national title on Nov. 20. Coach Mark Wetmore's Buffs defeated the defending champs from Wisconsin by a whopping 48 points.**

## Harriers run to NCAA dominance

The rest of the nation must be tiring of CU claiming national cross country titles, but the Buffs certainly aren't. Dominance is their game under coach Mark Wetmore. And the men's crown and women's second place in 2006 just added to the CU distance lore.

That's five national titles for the Buffs, the 10th time the men placed in the top five at the NAAs and the ninth time for the women during Wetmore's dozen seasons. It was the third men's title, and even the women's runner-up trophy was sweet.

"I'm as happy with the women finishing second as I am with the men winning," Wetmore said at the Nov. 20 NAAs in Terre Haute, Ind. "The women came in ranked sixth, and they are a very young team. For them to manage the madness of this event and stay calm and execute their race plan may be lucky but it is a testimony to their hard work."

Super soph Jenny Barringer led the Buff stampede by taking second place among roughly 300 in the chaos that is cross country racing. Junior Liza Pasciuto was 16th, while freshmen

Aislinn Ryan and Claire Maduza scored to help CU collect 223 points to Stanford's 195.

The No. 2 men were led by a 12th place from junior Brent Vaughn. Others keeping the CU point total at 94 were junior Stephen Pifer, senior Erik Heinenon, junior James Strang and senior Billy Nelson. They soundly defeated defending champion Wisconsin.

Earlier the Buffs won their 11th consecutive men's and 10th women's titles at the Big 12 championships (there have been 11 meets in conference history), and swept the NCAA Mountain Region Championships for the third straight year. It was no surprise that Wetmore was the Big 12 men's and women's, and national men's coach of the year — again.



CASEY A. CASS

**Junior Kit Richmond, here en route to the 2006 national title in the 20k freestyle, aims to win more for the Buff skiers as they seek another NCAA championship trophy.**

## Sports

### Skiers schuss toward 18th title

The ski team aims to grab CU's 24th national sports title this winter. The Buffs won their 17th skiing title in 2006, and coach Richard Rokos sees no reason his team can't repeat, saying it's a better balanced squad this year.

And the skiers are off to a great start. They posted their fifth straight victory, dating to last year, by cruising through the Utah Invitational Jan. 13-14.

Freshman Stefan Hughes paced the alpine effort with a second in the slalom and a third in the GS. Unlike last year, Rokos says, "We have some rising stars in men's alpine." Another freshman, Matt Gelso, was third in the 10k classical and won the 20k freestyle cross country race, with junior Kit Richmond in fourth. Not to be outdone, 2006 NCAA slalom champ Lucie Zikova was second in the Utah slalom, while junior Maria Grevsgaard won the 5k classical.

The Buffs had a solid lead in the Montana State Invitational, thanks to wins from Richmond and Grevsgaard, and were second behind Zikova's two wins at the DU Invitational in early February. They had two more meets prior to the March 7-10 NCAA championships in Jackson, N.H.

"It's one of those years where enthusiasm takes over," Rokos says.



PATRICK CAMPBELL

A swarming defense led by senior Thaddaeus Washington, No. 49, allowed just 22.3 points a game, CU's third best effort in Big 12 history.

## Hawkins designs big plays for second season

The off-season is when great teams are built, according to football coach Dan Hawkins, and the Buffs are working hard after posting 10 losses for just the third time in 117 years of Colorado football.

The season wound down with losses to KU (20-15), KSU (34-21) and Nebraska (37-14). A 33-16 win over Iowa State served as the highlight to couple with the earlier 30-6 victory over Texas Tech.

"The critical thing is knowing why you're 2-10," said Hawkins, who's been successful everywhere he's coached. "You'd better be able to reverse that."

And he's confident the Buffs will. "We will win a national championship at Colorado," Hawkins insists. "When we do I will pay for rings and send them

to these seniors," who went through years of transition and turmoil.

The returning athletes will be ready for spring ball in mid-March, knowing all positions are up for grabs. That includes incumbent quarterback Bernard Jackson, who will compete against two newcomers and the highly touted redshirt, Cody Hawkins, the coach's son. "Cody will play if he's the best guy," the coach says.

And the coaches were out on the road bolstering the troops with about 28 new recruits. The class is ranked in the top 30 by recruiting services — a considerable improvement over the past few years. They're led by offensive lineman Ryan Miller, the Colorado prep player of the year and a *USA Today* and *Parade* All-American.

## Soccer team kicks into Sweet 16

By winning eight of the last nine games, the soccer squad posted its most successful season ever. Among the firsts: the Buffs made it to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA tournament, hosted two tournament games, recorded 14 wins and demonstrated they can compete against the best.

The Buffs made their fourth consecutive tournament appearance after tying No. 9 Texas 1-1 in the Big 12 championships, losing the shootout after two overtimes. They were coming off a 3-2 double-overtime victory over No. 11 Texas A&M in the semifinals. An Octo-

ber slump left them 5-4-1 in the conference, but they climbed to No. 16 in the *Soccer America* poll.

In the NCAA opener, CU beat Colorado College in a 2-1 comeback and then knocked off the University of Denver by the same score to advance to the Sweet 16.

"We beat a very good team tonight," commented Randy Waldrum, coach of No. 1 and undefeated Notre Dame after a hard-fought 3-0 victory over the Buffs in South Bend Nov. 17. Despite the tough loss, Bill Hempen's young Buffs had a 14-6-4 record, best in CU history.

## Tough season courtside for Buffs

Near misses are common, but victories painfully hard to come by for both the women's and men's basketball teams.

Kathy McConnell-Miller's squad is suffering from inconsistent shooting and turnovers as four freshmen and two transfers learn the ropes of Big 12 play. The star continues to be junior Jackie McFarland, whose shooting percentage is fourth best in the nation and whose rebounding keeps the Buffs in many games. But the team leads the conference in turnovers and, through January, had won just four Big 12 games, with a 10-12 overall record. They can't pull off a win on the road, though

they've come close with a 61-58 loss at Oklahoma State.

Ricardo Patton's lame-duck season is much the same story. With eight freshmen and several disappointing performances from junior star Richard Roby, the Buffs have posted two conference victories and were 6-13 overall. Patton, who announced in October that he would resign after this season, his 12th at CU, did take solace in an 89-77 win over No. 12 Oklahoma State. Whoever is selected to take over will have a difficult task, made promising by the experience gained this year by freshmen Xavier Silas, Calvin Bay and Sean Kowal.

## Spikers knock off nation's best team

It took 21 years, but the volleyball squad knocked off a No. 1 team with a 19-30, 30-28, 15-30, 30-27, 15-12 victory over Nebraska Nov. 11. It was the only loss suffered by the national champion Huskers during the 2006 season and a huge win for the Buffs.

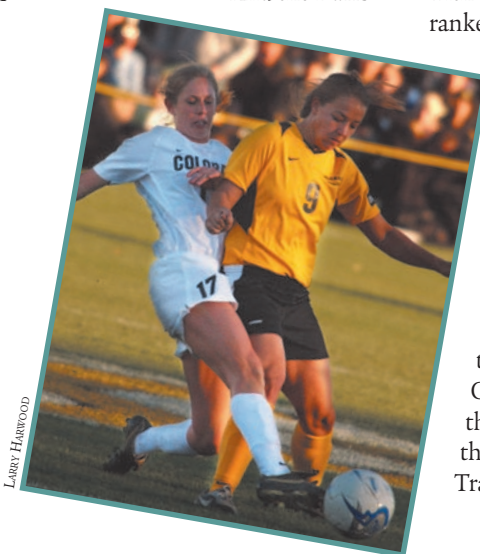
Beating Nebraska propelled CU to a tie for fourth in the Big 12 with a 12-8 record and the opportunity to host the first two rounds of the NCAA tournament.

And the Buffs

took advantage of being home by defeating No. 19 New Mexico State 30-24, 30-20, 34-32 before taking on No. 3 and defending national champion Washington. An injury to Buff kills leader Amber Sutherland hampered CU's effort in the 30-15, 22-30, 30-26, 30-24 loss to the Huskies. "I'd like to line them up again and take another shot," coach Pi'i Aiu (DistSt ex'89) said.

The Buffs finished the season with a 17-12 mark against 12 ranked teams and made the second round of the postseason for the first time since 2001. They were rewarded with a No. 24 rank in the final coaches' poll and a strong squad returning for 2007.

They lose All-American and first All-Big 12 teamer Ashley Nu'u. The senior setter is spending six months in Colorado Springs after being the third Buff ever named to the U.S. Women's National Training Team.



LARRY HARRWOOD

Big 12 and Regional Freshman of the Year Nikki Marshall, No. 17, led the Big 12 in goals.

## What a weekend!

Have the Buffs ever had a better weekend than Nov. 10-12? The soccer team won two NCAA tournament games to, for the first time, advance to the Sweet 16. The men's and women's cross country teams claimed the NCAA regional titles for the third straight year. The women's basketball team beat DU and almost knocked off No. 16 Vanderbilt. The men's basketball team opened the season with a victory over San Francisco. The football team defeated Iowa State. And, to top it off, the volleyball team posted its first victory over a No. 1 team by defeating eventual national champion Nebraska. That made it eight wins in five sports in three days. By fall's end the Buffs were sixth in the Directors Cup rankings of the nation's athletic departments.

## Into the Hall

Two Buff greats will be inducted into the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame April 10: Television commentator, 1972 Olympic skier and 1975 World Pro titlist Hank Kashiwa (A&S ex'68) of Wheat Ridge and basketball star Scott Wedman (Bus'74), who still ranks ninth in career rebounding and 15th in scoring at CU. The Kansas City resident played 13 seasons in the NBA, including with the 1984 and 1986 champion Boston Celtics.

## More support for athletics

For years the university has been pushing the athletic department to be self-supporting, but officials are recognizing the goal is not being realized — which is the case at 87 percent of Division 1-A schools. So in November the regents voted to reinstate about \$3 million in annual support by assuming the costs of the Marching Band and such events in athletic facilities as commencement and the Fourth of July celebrations. The university will also help cover the bond debt on the stadium addition and costs of fundraising. The assistance is on top of an \$8 million, 11-year loan granted in spring 2006.

In 1990, when Buffs were national football champions, the university provided 43 percent of the athletic department's budget. By 2005, the support was at 4 percent while ticket sales for football and basketball were down and scholarship costs for student-athletes increased to \$7 million this year, nearly 20 percent of the athletic budget.