

## **Academic and Athletic Excellence**

The University of Colorado Boulder offers student-athletes a world-class education and an elite Division I athletic experience in arguably the most beautiful college setting in America. As a member of the Pac-12 Conference, our student-athletes compete in one of the most competitive conferences in the NCAA. In fact, the Pac-12 is called the “Conference of Champions,” having won **478** NCAA Championships, or nearly double that of any other conference.

While we succeed athletically at the conference and national levels, our number one priority is educating our student-athletes. Our student-athletes continue to garner University, Conference and NCAA academic awards.

Data through the 2015 spring semester revealed that the school’s 336 student-athletes recorded the second highest grade point average for a spring term, 2.901, since information was first compiled in 1996. The cumulative grade point was an even healthier 2.930, third-highest on record.

### **Postgraduate Scholarships**

The NCAA awards scholarships to student-athletes who excel academically and athletically and who are in their last year of intercollegiate athletics competition. In the past 13 years, 15 CU student-athletes have earned NCAA postgraduate scholarships.

The Pac-12 Conference also awards postgraduate scholarships and selects four student-athletes annually from each school. Previously in the Big 12 Conference, 20 CU student-athletes earned a postgraduate scholarship.

### **Pac-12 Conference All Academic**

The Pac-12 Conference honors academic excellence by naming student-athletes to the Pac-12 Conference All Academic Teams. Unlike other conferences, selection to the All-Academic Team is not automatic based on GPA. Nominations are solicited and those athletes who have above a 3.0 cumulative grade point average and have participated in a minimum of 50 percent of the scheduled contests are considered. In the 2014-15 school year, 64 CU student-athletes earned Pac-12 All-Academic team honors.

The University of Colorado sponsors 17 varsity sports and has approximately 350 student-athletes. Colorado has won 28 national championships in its athletic history (20 skiing, five men’s cross country, two women’s cross country, one football). A long-time member of the Big Eight and then Big 12 conferences dating back to the middle of the last century, CU joined the Pac-12 for the 2011-12 season; in its first year in the conference, the Buffaloes captured two conference championships, men’s and women’s cross country, and also were also the postseason men’s basketball tournament champions. The men’s cross country team has since repeated as titlists in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

- The **Men's Basketball** team under fifth-year head coach Tad Boyle advanced to their fifth consecutive post-season appearance – a school-first reaching the College Basketball Invitational (CBI) quarterfinals. Despite an injury-plagued season that saw the Buffaloes finish 16-18, CU defeated NCAA Sweet 16 participant UCLA and the National Invitation Tournament Champion Stanford at home. All-Pac-12 Conference second team selection Askia Booker became the first CU player to lead the team in points per game average (17.2 ppg), assists (99), and steals (44) since Chauncey Billups performed the feat during the 1996-97 campaign, and Josh Scott, who missed eight games due to injury, was second in team scoring (14.5 ppg) and field goal percentage (.544), ranked first in rebounding at 8.4 caroms per game. Wesley Gordon led the team in blocked shots for the second straight year with 47.
- The **Women's Basketball** team finished 15-17 overall, ending on a high note with a run to the Pac-12 Tournament semifinals. Coach Linda Lappe's ninth-seeded Buffaloes pulled off the largest upset in Pac-12 Tournament history with a 68-65 win over No. 8 ranked and regular season league champion Oregon State in the quarterfinals; the lowest seed to ever defeat a No. 1 seed in tournament history. Senior Lexy Kresl was named to the Pac-12 Women's Basketball All-Academic team for the third straight year while sophomores Haley Smith and Zoe Beard-Fails earned honorable mention to the squad. Kresl would also go on to earn CoSIDA Academic All-District VII honors and was rewarded as a Pac-12 Postgraduate Scholarship recipient.
- The **Men's Cross Country** team lived up to the hype of being the top team in the country all season long, claiming its second consecutive (fifth overall) NCAA Championship, CU's fourth straight Pac-12 Championship and the NCAA Mountain Region Championship. Junior Ammar Moussa led the way with a fifth place finish at nationals to lead five Buffs in the top 40; Mark Wetmore was named both the NCAA, region and Pac-12 men's coach of the year.
- The **Women's Cross Country** enjoyed a good season as well, finishing third in the Pac-12 meet and claiming the NCAA Mountain Region title ahead of finishing seventh in the NCAA's. Sophomore Erin Clark earned her first All-America honor with a 31st place finish. Six Buffaloes, five women and one man, were named to the USTFCCA's All-Academic Teams for the 2014; honorees must have compiled a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or greater and must have finished as an All-American or among the 15 finishers (or 10 percent) in their regional meet. Maddie Alm, Kaitlyn Benner, Erin Clark, Jenny DeSouchet, and Sara Sutherland were the CU women recognized; while Ben Saarel earned the award on the men's side. Eight Buffs were named to the various Pac-12 All-Academic teams. The women's team also posted the best 2015 spring term (3.498 GPA) of all 17 CU varsity sports.

- The **Football** team finished with a 2-10 record under second-year coach Mike MacIntyre, but despite winning two less games than in his first season, the team made tremendous strides (while playing a tougher schedule than the year before). The Buffaloes were just 15 points shy of a 6-6 record and the bowl game eligibility that would have come with it; that was the combined margin of defeat for four Pac-12 games. The team set over 120 offensive individual and team records, including 51 by quarterback Sefo Liufau and 27 by receiver Nelson Spruce. The Buffs had their fair share of academic honors, with 10 named to the Pac-12 All-Academic Team (making the total 41 over the past two years), with 15 on the inaugural NFF/Colorado Chapter Academic All-Colorado team (including kicker Will Oliver, the state's student athlete-of-the-year). At the end of the Spring 2015 semester, the team had nine straight semesters over a 2.5 grade point average and had its third highest cumulative figure ever – 2.65.
- The **Men's Golf** team came oh-so-close to advancing to the NCAA Championship Finals; the Buffs placed sixth in the Central/Noblesville Regional, a disappointing finish after leading after the first round (and posted the best single round score for the three rounds, an 11-under 277). It was total redemption after an 11th place finish at the Pac-12 Championships, especially after a fourth-place finish in 2014. The team set a school mark with a 73.51 overall stroke average, with the spring average of 73.44 the second-best ever. Colorado finished the season ranked as the No. 47 team in the nation, its highest since the 2008-09 campaign, with junior Philip Juel-Berg earned All-American Scholar honors from the Golf Coaches Association of America.
- The **Women's Golf** team earned a second consecutive NCAA Regional invite after claiming a program best fifth place finish at the Pac-12 Championships. The Buffs were anchored by newcomer Esther Lee, who helped guide the team through arguably the nation's toughest conference in women's golf. Lee won her first career tournament last spring and she also became the first Buff named First-Team All-Pac-12. As a team, CU finished the season ranked No. 38 in the country and tied a school record with 11 top 10 finishes. Freshman Brittany Fan earned WGCA All-American Scholar honors while juniors Alexis Keating and Allie Zech were named to Pac-12 All-Academic teams.
- The **Lacrosse** team concluded its 2015 campaign with its second straight 11-win season, posting an 11-7 overall record and 5-4 Mountain Pacific Sport Federation mark to finish fourth in the conference. CU also qualified for the MPSF Tournament and advanced to the semifinals for a second consecutive year. Four Buffs were named to All-MPSF Teams and five earned a place on the MPSF All-Academic Team. In their young two-year history, the Buffaloes have compiled an impressive 22-15 record and are a stellar 12-4 at Kittredge Field.

- The **Ski** team claimed its third NCAA championship in the last five years, and in the process, won CU's 20th national title in the sport (11 men's, eight coed, one women's). Eight Buffaloes earned All-America honors in the meet, three gaining first-team status: Rune Oedegaard (freestyle, classical), Mads Stroem (freestyle, classical) and Maja Solbakken (classical). Five earned second-team nods: Thea Grosvold (slalom), Henrik Gunnarsson (giant slalom), Jessica Honkonen (slalom), Petra Hyncicova (freestyle, classical) and Ane Johnsen (freestyle, classical). Colorado also placed 11 team members on the NCAA Skiing All-Academic Team (its version of Academic All-America), as the qualifications included owning a 3.50 or better cumulative grade point average and participation in the NCAA regionals (unless injured). Grosvold, Gunnarsson, Honkonen, Hyncicova, Oedegaard, Solbakken, Camilla Brautaset, Roger Carry, Brooke Wales Granstrom, Clare Wise and Adam Zika all made the prestigious team. Head Coach Richard Rokos and Nordic Coach Bruce Cranmer were named the national coaches of the year.
- The **Women's Soccer** team claimed a program best third place finish in the Pac-12 Conference, punching its ticket to the postseason for a second straight year. The Buffs advanced to the second round of the NCAA Tournament also for a second consecutive year after defeating No. 15 BYU in the opening round at home, 2-0. CU finished with a 14-7-1 overall record and went 6-4-1 in the Pac-12. The team's six Pac-12 victories were the most-ever since joining the conference and first time it posted a winning Pac-12 record. Senior Tori Cooper and sophomore Brie Hooks earned All-Pac-12 Second Team honors and nine Buffs were named Pac-12 All-Academic Honorable Mentions.
- The **Women's Tennis** team achieved its first winning season since 2009 with an 11-11 record, and for eight consecutive weeks (Feb. 17-Apr. 13) was nationally ranked among the top 75 teams in the Intercollegiate Tennis Association poll. Nuria Ormeño Ruiz shared top honors in singles victories with Julyette Steur and Alex Aiello with 18 wins apiece. Ormeño Ruiz' 38 singles wins over the last two years, is a two-year best for a CU women's player since the 2009 and 2010 campaigns. Steur and teammate Kyra Wojcik became the first CU tandem to win 2014 ITA Mountain Region Championship during the fall 2014 season, earning an automatic berth to the National Indoor Championships. In the spring, Aiello became the first CU woman to reach a Pac-12 Tournament quarterfinal singles main draw, and in doubles teamed with Ormeño Ruiz to reach the Pac-12 semifinals main draw bracket, also a program first.

- The **Men's and Women's Track & Field** teams enjoyed another successful season, both indoors and out. The Pac-12 only sponsors an outdoors championship, so indoors the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation pools programs from as many as three other conferences; the women finished ninth and the men 11th, and the men sent athletes on to the NCAA championships including school record holders Jake Hurysz (mile run) and Alex Kizirian (weight throw). Several athletes enjoyed success in the outdoor season, most notably Erin Clark (steeplechase), Ammar Moussa (10,000) and Connor Winter (steeplechase), who each claimed an individual Pac-12 title; the men placed seventh at Pac-12s, while the women were eighth. Twenty-three Buffs competed at NCAA West Prelims and seven of those advanced to nationals. Fifteen student-athletes who competed in the indoor season, eight women and seven men, earned MPSF All-Academic honors; twenty-one athletes were named to the Pac-12 All-Academic Team.
- The **Women's Volleyball** team finished the year with a 20-14 record, its best in recent years. The Buffs tallied an 11-9 Pac-12 mark, its best ever Pac-12 finish, which tied for fourth. CU, which was ranked as high as 18<sup>th</sup> in the coaches poll, recorded several big wins against No. 2 Washington and No. 14 Arizona at home and No. 17 UCLA on the road. The Buffaloes qualified for the NCAA Tournament for the second straight year and defeated Northern Colorado in the first round before falling at Colorado State on its home court in five sets, narrowly missing advancing to the Sweet 16. Taylor Simpson became the first Buff to earn AVCA All-American First Team honors after being named to the all-region and All-Pac-12 teams. Three other Buffs garnered all-Pac 12 accolades of various levels, and the Buffs continued to excel in the classroom and had three players earn Pac-12 All-Academic honors.