



# FOLSOM FIELD



Folsom Field, named after legendary University of Colorado Coach Frederick Folsom, opened for the 1924 season and has been the home of Buffs ever since. The Buffaloes have played 86 seasons on the "hilltop," where the 400th game in the stadium's history took place in 2002.

Colorado owns one of the nation's best all-time home records, and in the previous 85 seasons of play at Folsom, the Buffaloes are 292-144-10, a winning percentage of .666.

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.

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 construction of the magnificent Dal Ward Center in 1991 added new bleacher seating in the north end zone and increased the



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





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 \$43 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.

In 2003, completion of a \$42 million east side renovation added 1,903 club seats and 41 seats, increasing Folsom's capacity to an all-time high of 53,750. The state-of-the-art complex is 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 current capacity is 53,613, as the fourth rows from three different levels of the Flatirons Club were removed in 2007, seats that always had some kind of obstructed view.

