

RUSSELL "SOX" WALSETH

Legendary CU Basketball Coach Was One Of School's Most Popular Figures

Russell "Sox" Walseth, the legendary University of Sox (the origin of that nickname was always Colorado basketball coach who was likely the first unknown to him, but he had it since childhood) and one of only a few to have coached both the men's and women's basketball teams at the same NCAA school, passed away on January 28, 2004. He was 77. School, where he graduated in 1944.

A player, coach and administrator, his time at CU spanned 38 years, starting as an athlete in the 1940s when he lettered a combined six times in both basketball and baseball. He spent two years in the Navy's V-5 and V-12 programs during which he began college, attending Carroll College in Helena, Mont. The Navy moved him to Colorado in the fall of 1945 and he was a regular on the basketball team in his first year at CU while still in the Navy program.

Taking over the reins of the men's program for the 1956-57 season, Walseth proceeded to coach the next 20 Buffalo teams. The winningest coach in CU men's basketball history with a 261-245 record, the Buffs won three Big Eight titles under his direction in 1961-62, 1962-63 and 1968-69. He was the Big Eight Conference coach of the year on four occasions (once as the Big Seven Conference), and his most prominent players included Ken Charlton, Jim Davis, Cliff Meely, Scott Wedman and Dave Logan. After his discharge, he stayed on at Colorado, playing guard with the reputation as a brilliant floor leader during the 1946-47 and 1947-48 seasons. He lettered three years as a shortstop for coach Frank Prentup on the baseball team, and would also try his hand in the minor leagues, spending two seasons with Victoria (B.C.), a member of the B League.

All three of his Big Eight champion teams represented the conference in the NCAA regional tournaments (in those days, only one school could advance from a conference). Eventual champion Cincinnati eliminated the Buffs in the first two appearances, while his third tourney team have represented his best coaching job in his tenure as he piloted a sophomore-dominated team to the league title and an NCAA berth. Perhaps his greatest game as a collegian occurred during his first year at Colorado when the Buffaloes made an early season tour that took them to New York's Madison Square Garden. Accounts at the time referred to his performance as, "Cool and crafty beyond his years, Walseth was unruffled at playing for the first time in the nation's top arena against one of the country's top teams, NYU." Though CU lost 66-52, Walseth led all scorers in the game with 20 points.

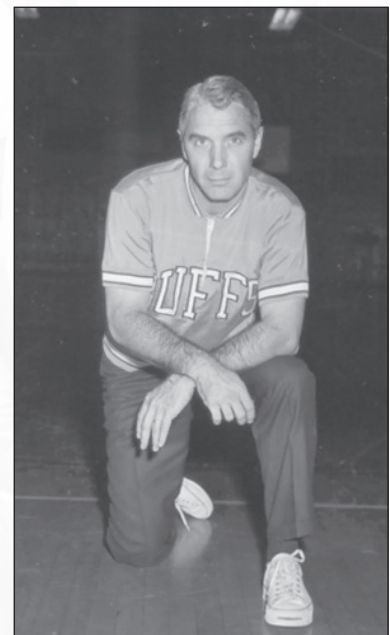
He retired from coaching for the first time in the spring of 1976 and remained on in an administrative position with the athletic department. But four years later (1980), and CU hit with budget woes, then athletic director Eddie Crowder asked him if he would come out of retirement to help the program to which he had devoted much of his adult life. Sox answered that call and would coach the CU women's team between 1980-83, then known as the "Lady Buffs," compiling an impressive 77-21 record. That mark included an incredible 43-0 record at home, and once again, he earned coach of the year accolades.

The basketball floor at the Coors Events/Conference Center is named after him. In 1998, he was inducted into the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame, and four years later in 2002, he was a member of the fourth class inducted into the University of Colorado Athletic Hall of Fame.

SOX WALSETH YEAR-BY-YEAR

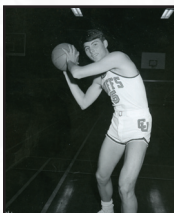
Season	Conference				Overall		
	W	L	Pct.	Rank	W	L	Pct.
1956-57	5	7	.417	t-4th	14	9	.609
1957-58	3	9	.250	t-6th	8	15	.348
1958-59	8	6	.571	t-3rd	14	10	.583
1959-60	8	6	.571	t-4th	14	10	.583
1960-61	7	7	.500	4th	15	10	.600
1961-62	13	1	.929	1st	19	7	.731
1962-63	11	3	.786	t-1st	19	7	.731
1963-64	9	5	.643	2nd	15	10	.600
1964-65	8	6	.571	t-5th	13	12	.520
1965-66	6	8	.429	t-5th	12	13	.480
1966-67	10	4	.714	t-2nd	17	8	.680
1967-68	3	11	.214	t-7th	9	16	.360
1968-69	10	4	.714	1st	21	7	.750
1969-70	7	7	.500	t-3rd	14	12	.538
1970-71	6	8	.429	t-5th	14	12	.538
1971-72	4	10	.286	t-7th	7	19	.269
1972-73	9	5	.643	t-2nd	13	13	.500
1973-74	4	10	.286	6th	9	17	.346
1974-75	4	10	.286	t-7th	7	19	.269
1975-76	4	10	.286	7th	7	19	.269
Totals	139	137	.504	.....	261	245	.516
CU Women							
1980-81	10	0	1.000	1st	28	5	.848
1980-82	8	2	.800	t-1st	28	8	.778
1982-83	7	5	.583	3rd	21	8	.724
Totals	25	7	.781	....	77	21	.786
Combined							
Totals	164	144	.532	....	338	266	.560

- CU's all-time leader in victories with 261
- Five-time Conference Coach-of-the-Year (Big Eight: 1961-62, 1962-63, 1968-69, 1972-73. Big Seven Conference: 1956-57)
- Likely the first and only a few to coach both the men's and women's basketball teams at the same school
- CU won three Big Eight titles under his direction
- Coached 20 different CU teams from 1957-1976
- Coached the CU women from 1980-83 and an impressive 77-21, including 43-0 at home
- Coors Events Center basketball floor was named after him in 1996
- 1998 inductee of the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame
- 2002 Inductee of the CU Athletic Hall of Fame



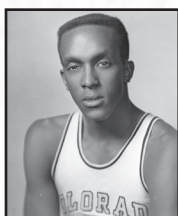
In Memoriam

(Former CU men's basketball players who have passed away the last couple of years)



PAT FRINK (1964-65, 1966-68)

Pat Frink, who left an indelible mark on the Buffalo program in the mid-1960s, died May 6, 2013 near his ranch in Tucson. He was 67. Frink was the first player to lead the Buffaloes in scoring in three different seasons, averaging 15.0 points during the 1964-65 campaign as a sophomore. After sitting out the next season with a knee injury suffered just weeks before the first game, he came back and led the team as a junior with an 18.3 mark and then again as a senior with 18.9. Only five players have led the Buffs three times since, Cliff Meely, Emmett Lewis and Shaun Vandiver, followed by the only pair to do it four times, Donnie Boyce and most recently Richard Roby. Frink was just the third sophomore at the time to ever lead Colorado in scoring, following Art Bunte (19.1 in 1952-53) and Wilky Gilmore (13.9 in 1959-60). He earned first-team All-Big 8 honors that year and second-team honors his junior and senior seasons. His junior year, Colorado finished 17-8, including 10-4 in league play including a huge 62-59 upset of No. 7 Kansas in Boulder. KU won the rematch, 66-59, in Lawrence in the next-to-last game of the season to clinch the conference crown, with CU tying for second with Nebraska. Frink's 1,288 career points still rank 16th all-time at CU, but were second only to Ken Charlton (1,352 from 1960-63) at the time of his graduation.



BILLY LEWIS (1957-60)

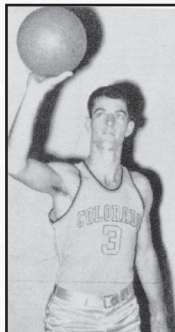
CU Athletic Hall of Fame member Billy Lewis, the school's first African-American varsity basketball player passed away at the age of 72. He died in his Atlanta home on June 14, 2011. Lewis was inducted in CU's Athletic Hall of Fame in October 2008, and gave a very emotional speech before 500 people, which included about a dozen of his relatives that attended from as far away as Atlanta, Baltimore and even Egypt. Just a few weeks ahead of America electing its first black president, he talked about how far the country had come from the days where he was a student-athlete and often forced to eat and sleep away from his teammates on road trips because some hotels would not allow blacks on their premises. Some excerpts of his acceptance speech, which onlookers easily could see him bursting with pride:

"In order to receive a full athletic scholarship at CU, or any other Division I school, one has to have above average skills and maintain those skills. They have to be able to compete before thousands of people and know that the pressure of the butterflies that all of us have experienced are character building. Those are the kinds of things that I experienced. My grandmother told me to never let anyone break my spirit. That and the chance to attend a multi-cultural school like (Denver's) Manual High School enabled me to attend a school like CU. It's a blessing for me to be successful and because of what I learned and what I was exposed to at CU, I was never afraid of anything.

"I hope in some small way I have contributed to the success of the university, as it has benefitted me in a myriad of ways."

His best season was his junior year, when he averaged 5.9 points per game with a career-high 21 against Nebraska. The 6-3 forward played in 67 career games, scoring 244 points and grabbing 197 rebounds in lettering three times. In 1959, after the basketball season was complete, he decided to come back out for track in his specialty, the high jump; he cleared 6-6½ and finished second in the CU Invitational (to Wyoming's Jerry Lane, who jumped an inch higher) which topped his previous personal best of 6-2 as a senior in high school, where he was coached by CU great and Hall of Fame member Gil Cruter, who himself was one CU's first black track athletes in the early 1930s.

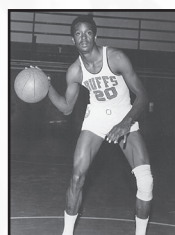
Just as important if not more so were his contributions as a student leader, becoming the first African-American elected by the student body as commissioner of the ASUC (Associated Students of the University of Colorado); he led a delegation of students and testified on the resolutions against discrimination in housing and employment practices and headed the SFHD, Students For Human Dignity, two of many causes he championed that helped change CU in a positive way forever. Upon his graduation from CU in 1960, he clerked for a Denver judge, and after marrying fellow CU grad JoKatherine Holliman (the first African American woman on CU's homecoming court).



LEASON "PETE" MCCLOUD (1939-42)

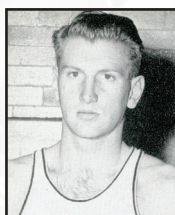
"Pete" McCloud died Monday, June 17 at the Newton Medical Center. He was 94. Known for his silky-smooth shot, a great passer and rebounder, McCloud is one of CU men's basketball's eight all-Americans (1942). He played from 1939-42 under head coach Forrest "Frosty" Cox. The leading scorer for the 1941-42 Big Seven Champion Buffaloes team, McCloud was Coach Cox's "go to guy." McCloud's play caught the attention of national media and he joined fellow Buff Bob Doll on the Look, Pic and Time magazines' All-America squads, and was a unanimous All-Big Seven selection. Both men also grew up in Newton, Kan. On November 9, 2011, McCloud was named a University of Colorado Living Legend at the Court Sport Preview Celebration on the court of the George Boedecker Jr. Gym that included

CU President Bruce Benson, Chancellor Phil DiStefano, former Athletic Director Mike Bohn, a number of regents, and special honorees Martin Trotsky and Bob Kirchner, a pair of early 1940s CU hoops standouts. CU also honored the 1938-1942 Colorado basketball teams. McCloud received a plaque with his name on it with a large "C" in the center, stating that he was a "living legend" in Colorado Basketball. This was resolved by the University of Colorado Board of Regents on Nov. 9, 2011. In 2012, he was also inducted as a Living Legend in the Kansas High School Hall of Fame.



CLIFF MEELY (1968-71)

Cliff Meely passed away Tuesday, May 28 at the Boulder Community Hospital due to complications from a blood infection. He was 65. One of the pure prolific scorers and rebounders in the history of CU basketball during his four-year career (1968-1971), Meely remains either at or near the top in over a dozen statistical categories some four-plus decades later. A fixture at men's and women's basketball games at the Coors Events Center regardless of the team's performance, Meely, generally in good health, developed septic shock from the infection and died unexpectedly. Known for his quickness and agility, Meely could play any position on the floor. Under late coach Russell "Sox" Walseth, Meely led Colorado to the Big Eight title in 1968-69, as the Buffaloes were 21-7 with a 10-4 mark in league play. A three-time All-Big Eight team member, Meely earned first-team All-America honors as a senior and set 16 school and eight conference records during his career. Additionally, Meely's 24.3 points per game career scoring average is still a school record and his 427 points scored in league play set a Big Eight Conference record in 1971. Legendary Syracuse head coach Jim Boeheim told CU play-by-play announcer Mark Johnson that Meely likely was among the top five most underrated college basketball players of all time. In 1995-96, Meely was named to the Associated Press' all-time Big Eight first team. In March of 2013, Meely was inducted in the Pac-12 Conference Men's Basketball Hall of Fame. Meely still holds the CU scoring mark for most points a single game (47) and owns five of the top eight scoring games in school history. His jersey number (20) is just one of two retired numbers in the CU annals.



LES METZGER (1946-48)

Andrew Leslie (Les) Metzger passed away peacefully on June 18, 2013. He attended Phoenix Jr. College where he was captain of the basketball team and was recruited by the University of Colorado in 1946 to play varsity basketball. He was team captain from 1946-48. He graduated from CU with a major in business and education. Les had an opportunity to play professional basketball, yet chose, instead to play in the National Amateur Athletic Union. His team played in the first World Basketball Tournament in Argentina, finishing second.