

# Neuheisel builds trust, CU offense

By Mitch Sherman  
Senior Editor

Rick Neuheisel has been there. It doesn't matter where. He's been there. He's been everywhere. Colorado's new head coach is 34 years old. He has never been a head coach; he has never been an offensive coordinator. But when it comes to relating to his players, Neuheisel is never lacking in experience.

"I am uniquely qualified to handle every problem," Neuheisel said. "I've been a walk-on. I've been a guy without a jersey. I've been a guy without a locker. I've been the guy that was the last guy on the plane to games."

"I've been a fifth string, fourth string, third string, second string and first string player. I've been a guy who came in to win a game. I've been a guy who was booed out of a game. I've been a Rose Bowl MVP at the end of it."

"There's nobody who is going to walk into my office with a problem I won't understand, because I know exactly what it feels like."

The second-youngest coach in college football, Neuheisel succeeds 13-year Colorado coach Bill McCartney, who resigned last November after rebuilding the Colorado program. Neuheisel was hired by McCartney in February 1994 as a receivers and quarterbacks coach.

An undersized walk-on quarterback from Tempe, Ariz., Neuheisel climbed the depth chart at UCLA in the early 1980s, eventually leading the Bruins to a 45-9 win over Illinois in the 1984 Rose Bowl.

He played two seasons in the USFL and part of one year in the NFL before the players' strike in 1987 led him to coaching.

He was hired at UCLA as a full-time assistant and coached quarterbacks until 1990, when he became the

Bruins' receivers coach. While coaching at UCLA, Neuheisel attended law school at Southern Cal. He graduated in 1990 and was sworn into the Arizona State Bar Association in 1991.

"The people of Colorado have been terrific," Neuheisel said. "They have gone out of their way to make me feel wanted and appreciated, and obviously when you replace a guy like Bill McCartney, some people are going to wonder why."

"But it's very exciting for me. I am consumed by the thought of being ready for the first game."

When Neuheisel was hired, he promised McCartney he would stay in Boulder for at least three years. That way, Neuheisel said, quarterback Koy Detmer would have only one position coach for the remainder of his time in Boulder.

Detmer, who started for the Buffs in 1992 against Nebraska, redshirted last year. Meanwhile, Neuheisel transformed Kordell Stewart into one of the nation's premier passers.

Now that Stewart is gone, Neuheisel said fans would see a more mature, wiser Detmer — a result of the quarterback's close relationship with his coach.

Neuheisel's ability to connect with Detmer is representative of his kinship with most of the Colorado players.

"Once you build that trust with your players, you can ask them to do anything," Neuheisel said. "And they'll do it. And it isn't just football. You can ask them to go to class, and they'll go. You can ask them to do all the basic things a student-athlete is supposed to do."

This year, he has asked his players to change defensive alignments. The Buffaloes are switching from a 3-4 set



Mitch Sherman/DN

Colorado's Rick Neuheisel faces the Big Eight media for the first time as Colorado's head football coach.

to a 4-3 defense, an alignment that emphasizes speed and pursuit of the ball.

Neuheisel said he was apprehensive to change anything about a team that last season finished 11-1 and No. 3 in the nation.

"The kids really embraced the change," he said, "and it obviously requires some position changes."

The 4-3 defense, Neuheisel said, will allow the Buffaloes to pose a better challenge against quick offenses.

Last year, playing a 3-4 against Nebraska's option attack, Colorado's defensive weaknesses were exposed and the Buffaloes were almost help-

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**RICK NEUHEISEL**  
Colorado football coach

less in certain situations, Neuheisel said.

The passive style of defense hurt the Colorado offense, too, because the offensive linemen didn't become accustomed to facing aggressive defensive sets. The offensive line was used to playing against the softer 3-4 in practice.

"We weren't ready," he said. "Nebraska's defensive ends went around our linemen like we were in quicksand. But now that we are playing that against ourselves in practice, we are going to be ready. I don't know if we'll block that guy from Nebraska yet. I can't tell you that, but I know we will have practiced against it more."

## CU dumps red ban, lessens NU rivalry

By Mitch Sherman  
Senior Editor

For the first time since 1982, people are walking down the street in Boulder, Colo., wearing red clothing.

Bill McCartney, Colorado's football coach for the past 13 seasons, is gone; and so is the state's self-imposed ban on anything resembling the University of Nebraska's colors.

When McCartney arrived in Boulder, he designated the Cornhusker matchup as Colorado's "red-letter game."

Each year, the Nebraska game was written in red ink on the Buffaloes' schedules.

Rick Neuheisel, Colorado's new coach, has lifted the ban. The Huskers no longer make or break Colorado's season.

Senior center Bryan Stoltenberg said too much emphasis might have been placed on the Nebraska game in the past.

"The coaches are not going to make the game bigger than life for us," Stoltenberg said. "They realize that each week we have a tough opponent. That's not to say that any emotion from the players or drive from the players is going to be any less."

*"The coaches are not going to make the game bigger than life for us."*

**BRYAN STOLTENBERG**  
Colorado center

Stoltenberg, who has never beaten Nebraska in his three years on the Colorado team, said the coaches from McCartney's staff now would probably admit they stressed the Nebraska game too much.

"But you look at every season," Stoltenberg said, "and the winner of that game goes on to be the winner of the Big Eight and goes on to play for the national championship."

Nebraska's national title last season was the second by a Big Eight team this decade. Colorado shared the championship with Georgia Tech in 1990, which was the last year the Buffaloes beat Nebraska.

Colorado has not lost a conference game to any team other than Nebraska since Oklahoma defeated the Buffaloes 17-14 on Oct. 22, 1988.

## Colorado Buffaloes

Offense			Defense		
WR 21	Rae Carruth	6-0 180	DE 59	Greg Jones	6-4 240
WR 2	James Kidd	5-8 160	DT 90	Aaron Marshall	6-2 250
LT 66	Clint Moore	6-3 290	DT 94	Kerry Hicks	6-6 260
LG 63	Heath Irwin	6-5 290	DE 95	Daryl Price	6-5 255
C 64	Brian Stoltenberg	6-2 280	WLB 23	Allen Wilbon	6-0 220
RG 65	Chris Naeole	6-4 285	MLB 16	Matt Russell	6-2 235
RT 78	Melvin Thomas	6-3 285	SLB 33	Ron Merkerson	6-3 240
TE 88	Matt Lepsis	6-5 255	CB 4	Elton Davis	5-9 175
WR 80	Phil Savoy	6-2 190	SS 3	Donnell Leomiti	6-0 205
QB 14	Koy Detmer	6-1 170	FS 15	Steve Rosga	6-1 205
TB 5	Herchell Troutman	5-6 190	CB 8	T.J. Cunningham	6-0 190
PK 17	Neil Voskeritchian	5-9 160	P 28	Andy Mitchell	6-2 195

DN graphic

## Colorado Buffaloes

1995 Schedule	
Date:	Opponent
Sept. 2	at Wisconsin
Sept. 9	Colorado State
Sept. 16	Northeast Louisiana
Sept. 23	Texas A&M
Sept. 30	at Oklahoma
Oct. 7	Kansas
Oct. 21	at Iowa State
Oct. 28	Nabraska
Nov. 4	at Oklahoma State
Nov. 11	at Kansas
Nov. 18	Iowa State

DN graphic

## Mr. McCartney is out, 'Rick' is in as Colorado Buffalo team develops

From Staff Reports

As a 34-year old head coach, Rick Neuheisel knows he is not going to be viewed the same as Tom Osborne, Bobby Bowden or Lou Holtz.

However, at this point, Neuheisel said, he doesn't want to be compared to any other coaches.

"I'm Rick," he said. "That's who I am. People call me Mr. Neuheisel. No, that's my dad. I need to be me."

And if his players refer to him by his first name, that's fine, too.

Neuheisel said when he was first hired as an assistant at UCLA, Bruins coach Terry Donahue was concerned about the players calling Neuheisel by his first name.

"It doesn't bother me," Neuheisel said. "If I feel it's a challenge or a front to authority, then it will bother me."

Neuheisel admitted that the added responsibility of being a head coach would probably cause him to age quicker.

"Being in charge of everything is difficult, but it is fun to handle,"

Neuheisel said. "I'm still waiting for the day when I walk into a recruit's home and I'm older than the parents."

Neuheisel also had to clear up reports about a party he held at his home. He said about 200 people attended the gala, including assistant coaches, custodians and police.

Neuheisel said police were called out and asked him to turn the music down at his place. He said he obliged.

"I wouldn't call it getting busted," Neuheisel said. "We just turned down the music."