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## Fallout

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It's February 8, 1947. Fans are packed into the Carlson Gymnasium pool. Spectators line the catwalk for a chance to see their Buffs take down their in-state rivals, Colorado State.

A lot has changed since the last time CU hosted Colorado State. America had entered the war, invaded Europe, dropped an atomic bomb, and now is beginning to grapple with the emergence of a new world power in the communist nation of the Soviet Union. Even though it had changed drastically outside of the pool you wouldn't know it based on the competition being conducted. The sound of the starter's pistol, the roar of the crowd, the echoing of splashes as swimmers powered themselves through the water remained the same as before the war.

As the meet approached the finish it became more and more apparent that the result would come down to one man: CU's Dick Lepman.

He had been dominant all season, by far the team's best swimmer and arguably the best freestyler in the conference. As a result, he was assigned the most important role on the team: the anchor (the final swimmer) on the freestyle relay. He had been the definition of dominant that afternoon as he won both of his individual events. But, right now Lepman was strokes behind the competition in the most important race of his life.

The Buffs had already dropped their first matchup of the season against the Rams in Fort Collins. There was no conference championship meet scheduled after this. This was it. This was the final chance for Colorado to claim a shred of prestige and to take down their rivals.

Anxiously watching on the side of the pool was the Buffs first year coach Paul Bradley. It was an unfamiliar place for him to be standing. In his three decades of life on this planet, up to his point, he was rarely if ever positioned in or near a swimming pool.

Make no mistake Bradley was a fantastic athlete, but until 1947 his passion rested in a multitude of other sports. Hailing from Sterling, Colorado he attended CU starting in 1928 and he participated in as many sports teams as he could.

During his four years at the school he played in three of the most respected sports on campus: basketball, football and track. He was most well known for football where he starred as the team's captain in 1932 as well as their best wide receiver and lineman. But, he also had a great deal of success in the other two sports.

*Paul Bradley About to Catch a Football*



On the basketball court he was a solid contributor. He was a backup forward and did enough to earn himself a letter in 1931. Overall he was described as a scrappy hustler on several mediocre Buff squads.

The third sport he competed in was track. Bradley utilized the legs that made him a potent offensive threat on the field to propel him to record heights on the pitch. By all accounts he did not begin participating in track until his junior year but took quickly to the high and low hurdle.

The hurdles are a uniquely challenging event in track in that they require a participant to run very fast while simultaneously timing jumps over obstacles in such a manner that they lose as little speed as possible. As might you may assume, high hurdles involve higher hurdles, but to compensate for the increased challenge the event is run over shorter distances of 50 to 110 meters. Meanwhile in low hurdling the bar is a foot shorter and the distance is increased to 200 meters.

If you are a modern fan of track you might be puzzled by the existence of this low hurdle event. Unfortunately, like the plunge for distance in swimming the low hurdles were forsaken by their sport. Deemed as too easy and not requiring enough technical skill, the event was shelved for good in 1960. With its removal from competition Don Stryon of little known Northeast Louisiana State University is and likely will forever be the record holder in the event.

It wasn't an uncommon sight to see Bradley win both the high and low hurdles. He did so on numerous occasions, but he also had a terrible habit of getting himself disqualified. In fact it was often the biggest impediment to him winning.



*Bradley racing in the hurdles (1933)*

In his two seasons racing he was disqualified at least three times. The first time was in a dual meet against Colorado State. He won the low hurdles easily with a time of 24.8, but was ruled out by the officials. He did the same thing a year before when he was ousted from the high hurdles after knocking over three hurdles before crossing the finish line.

His proclivity for knocking over the hurdles reared its head again in the 1932 conference meet. He stumbled through at least one hurdle and was clipped from the conference title in the low hurdles, costing the Buffs third place at the meet.

It wasn't all doom and gloom for Bradley as he did return to form to rattle off a breezy 14.7 seconds in the high hurdles. It would have tied a conference record, but it was not recognized due to the strong wind at his back which improved his time.

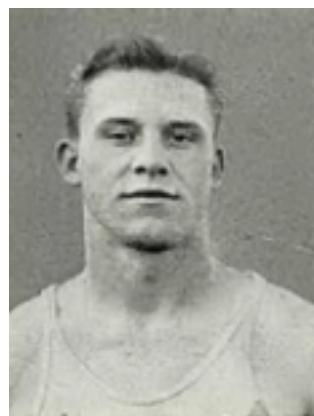
Bradley's hard work ultimately paid off as he was rewarded with a bid to compete in the NCAA Championship meet in Chicago. He was joined by fellow Buffs Otto Staab, John Slovek, and Meredith Jameson. Rocky Mountain News writer Howard "Ham" Berresfield offered a rather pessimistic view questioning how the track athletes from Colorado, including Bradley, would hold up under the scrutiny of tougher competition.

To have a chance at winning he noted that Bradley would have to, "*clip almost a full second of his high barrier efforts*" to beat Ohio State's George Keller.

Bradley was not able to pull off that feat. We don't know how he performed in the qualifiers, but his name was absent from the finals which saw George Saling of Iowa eke out a win against Keller by one tenth of a second. Bradley's teammates fared little better as the team didn't score a single point at the meet.

Even though the University of Colorado's Track season was complete, Bradley still had one last high stake meet remaining on his schedule. 1932 was an Olympic year with the games set to take place in Los Angeles in July. In order to qualify for the games Bradley would have to pass through a flurry of meets. The first of which was the Rocky Mountain Regional meet taking place at the University of Denver's Stadium.

*Paul Bradley (1932)*



At the meet he fully put his disqualification demons behind him sprinting the 110 meter high hurdles in fifteen seconds. It was time that was quick enough to advance to the semi finals round that was taking place the next week in Long Beach, California. Unfortunately, his dreams would be smashed by the financial limitations of the Denver Athletic Club. The DAC decided to only finance athletes that they believed had a chance to qualify for the Olympic Trial finals. As a consequence 8 out of the 12 qualifiers from the meet were unable to make the journey including Bradley.

In hindsight the DAC's decision did prove to have merit as Bradley's time of 15 seconds wouldn't have been enough to qualify for the finals.

The next season with more experience under his belt continued to excel in both the high and low hurdles. Unlike in 1932 he would win both events at the conference meet, beating out an impressive field in Utah.

It was the perfect high note to end his collegiate career on. After graduating he packed up his car and moved south to New Mexico. He would spend the next six years there coaching the sports he used to play: basketball, football and track at McAlister and Del Norte high schools. He was just as successful at coaching as he was playing. In his first year at McAlister he led his track team to a second place at state. In addition he racked up numerous division titles at both schools winning three in football, five in basketball titles and three more in track.

In 1939 he returned to Colorado where he coached at Aurora for one year before eventually taking the helm at his hometown school of Sterling. Finally, in 1941 Bradley returned to Boulder as an assistant football coach. Taking the job from Walter "Buck" Driskell who had departed for Wyoming, Bradley was to be paid \$2,000 for a 10 month contract. That amount sounds like an incredibly modest salary, but in today's terms it would translate to around a much more liveable \$43,000.



*Paul Bradley (1941)*

Bradley would spend his first season coaching the offensive and defensive lines for the Buffs. It was a rough year as the team, under the leadership of new head coach Jim Yeager, won just three games and didn't win a single road contest. These were expected growing pains and in year two of his tenure the Buffs returned to

form winning seven games and a share of the conference title with Utah.

With the team finally starting to take shape Bradley would have to leave it all behind as the United States entered the war following Pearl Harbor. In 1943 he enlisted in the Navy and served three years as a junior lieutenant in aviation.

In 1945 he returned stateside and was offered his job back as an assistant coach. It was an easy gig for Bradley the team was stuffed with talent on the line with multiple men clocking in at 200 pounds. He had, "*No worries except to decide which of the dozen of which good prospects will start*"

On January 2nd, 1947, Athletic Director Harry Carlson announced that athletics would resume in full capacity for wrestling, swimming and gymnastics. The swim team was pinned to an eight meet schedule, their second longest ever. The man tasked to lead the rebooted team was of course Paul Bradley

At this point Carlson was practically the foremost expert on hiring collegiate swim coaches within the state of Colorado. Bradley was the sixth hire that he had made for the position since he assumed his role atop Colorado athletics in 1928. That's quite a bit of turnover compared to in-state rivals Northern Colorado and Colorado State who hadn't changed head coaches of their teams since 1928.

With these six coaches a clear trend starts to emerge illustrating a common approach that Carlson took for staffing the swimming vacancy. Contrary to today where swimming knowledge and experience is an obvious requisite to coach an NCAA swim team Carlson looked for two things: Coaching experience (preferably in football) and convenience.

John H. Mason, George "Doc" Waite, and Robert Shelton all worked with the football team either as an assistant coach or as an athletic trainer and already worked in those roles when they were hired to coach swimming. Ernest Collins and Edmund Chapman had no prior coaching experience but were on campus to fill the vacancy quickly.

With all of that in mind we can see why Paul Bradley would appear to be the perfect hire to Carlson. He had an extensive track record as an outstanding athlete, was a loyal alumnus that had coached the football team for years, likely had some basic swimming training due to his service in the navy and had plenty of free time to coach the swim team during the football offseason.

Greeting Bradley was an entirely fresh squad of swimmers. None of the swimmers from either the 1942 team or the 1944-1945 war time naval teams were around. The team experienced tremendous growth and improvement since its founding in 1925, but now it was essentially back to square one.

While things may have looked bleak at face value, the Buffs were not entirely devoid of collegiate swimming experience. The aforementioned Dick Lepman had a year under his belt at one of the top swim programs west of the Mississippi at Iowa State.

Coming out of highschool Lepman was a highly heralded swimming prospect. He grew up in Glencoe, Illinois, a northern suburb of Chicago located along Lake Michigan. He attended New Trier Township High School which had one of the top swim teams in the state. They had won eleven straight conference championships before Lepman arrived in 1942.

Freshman and sophomores were barred from the varsity team so it wouldn't be until 1944 that Lepman was really allowed to shine. At the Illinois State meet he won the 100 freestyle while also anchoring the first place freestyle relay which propelled his team to undefeated season and state title. He was stellar at his senior year state meet as well, although his personal victories were not enough to allow New Trier to hold onto their title.

With a long list of high school accolades, Lepman caught the eye of Iowa State's new coach Russ Dickinson. With many schools, like Colorado still without swim teams, Lepman hopped at the chance to compete as a freshman.

On day one Lepman was the one of the Cyclones top sprint freestylers. Appearing in every single meet

during the teams shortened season. His best performance of the season came in the final meet against Nebraska in which he won both the 60 and 100 freestyle and contributed to a new conference record in the 440 freestyle relay.

After the season, Iowa State would change coaches as they welcomed back their previous coach from 1941-1944, Jack McGuire. Whom like Bradley was returning from his service in the Navy. We don't know why Lepman decided to transfer to Colorado but he probably wasn't enthusiastic about the transfer in power at the head coaching position. It's also equally possible that as a midwestern boy he yearned to experience the beauty of the Rocky Mountains to which Boulder is so near.

*Dick Lepman (1949)*



Regardless of the motive the Buffs swim team reaped the benefits of getting an outstanding athlete to assist in their rebuild.

Around Lepman Colorado assembled a pretty respectable team. Joining him in the freestyle events were Frank Eastman and Keith Gilmore. Eastman was a freshman from Oklahoma City and Gilmore was a senior from Ontario, Oregon. Despite the age gap both shared a common bond that many men on the team this season had: they had both been enlisted in the Navy.

In the stroke events Colorado was well stocked with another Illinois native Clarence Herbst holding down the breaststroke and Dick Ready stroking on his back. Rounding out the main bunch was Richard "Summer" Downing who would emerge as a legitimate threat on the boards. Despite the odds against them the Buffs swim team had risen and appeared well positioned to return to their past form.

## 1946-1947 Season

### Record

6-2

### Head Coach

Paul Bradley

### Team Roster

Phyllis 'John' Alderman	Bruce Bowers
Gordon Bradt	William Cady
Summer Downing	Frank Eastman
Dave Ebaugh	Lawrence Flower
Keith Gilmore	Clarence Herbst
Dick Lepman	Bernard Michael
Robert Powloski	Dick Ready
Frank Zaitz	



### Northern CO 8, Colorado 66 - Jan 18, 1947

Before the war, the Bears swim team was in shambles. They had enjoyed several respectable seasons in the 1930s before slinking into irrelevance. Due to a lack of opponents and student participation, they had to shutter the team in 1939. They returned the following year but were never the same. In a weak conference that only had a mediocre Mines team and a small Colorado College squad they failed to find any success.

With the program already spiraling they were dealt an even more serious blow when it was announced that the man in charge since its inception, Coach Hank Brown, was out and in his place was Don "Punch" Merriman.

Merriman assumed the role in the summer of 1946 along with an assistant position as the football team's backfield coach. Punch was an alumni of Northern Colorado having played fullback there from 1933-1936. It's likely he got his unique nickname during that period. Perhaps owing to his ability to punch through a defensive line or maybe it was due to a proclivity to throw punches? Unfortunately, we will never know.

Whatever the case, Merriman would have to learn how to roll with the punches in his first season at the helm. Unlike Bradley, he was not gifted with any star talents. We can only infer the makeup of the team from the sparse meet results that exist from the season, but there really isn't much to note.

In their meet against Colorado State they had just one place finisher: Leach. In a closer loss to Wyoming, they fared a little bit better, losing by 26 mainly due to more second place finishes and a win in the breaststroke by Edwards.

*Unnamed UNC Diver (1947)*



Both of those meets took place after their clash with the Buffs. It is possible that Edwards and Leach participated against Colorado but if they did it had little impact as the Bears were clobbered 66-8.

While no results or recaps exist, the score indicates without a doubt that no Bears swimmer finished first or second in any event. With a score so low, the majority of their points likely came as the result of just participating in the relays.

For the Buffs, it was a historic win following their break away from the water. The margin of victory of 58 made it the largest win in team history. The previous record was a 51 point win against a downtrodden 1929 Wyoming team.

### **Colorado 54, Wyoming 21 - Jan 25, 1947**

The following weekend, Colorado continued to exceed expectations by crushing Wyoming with a 32 point win.

For a lot of teams that would be a blowout loss, but for the Cowboys a 30 point loss to CU was a major coup. The strong showing was orchestrated by the Cowboys new coach Francis “The Music Man” Stroup. After years of turnover, Stroup was the fourth coach in four seasons for Wyoming; the school finally appeared to have found their man.

Stroup, like most Wyomingites, was not native to the state. For the first half of his life, his roots were firmly planted in the Lone Star state. In the late 1920s, he attended North Texas University located in Denton, just outside of Dallas. While there, his life was consumed with sports. He earned letters in track, basketball and football while majoring in Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

He also swam while on campus, and was an excellent driver and backstroker. However, he never earned a letter in the sport. That is because North Texas did not have a formal swim team sponsored by the school. Instead, they had an incredibly unique organization called the “Hobo swimming club.” Hobo is an antiquated slang or slur used to describe unhoused people, the implication here being that the swim team lacked a true place to call home without support from the school. Interestingly, the club traces its origins back

to the same year Colorado received a varsity swim team.

*Francis Stroup (1931)*



After he graduated, he worked several other teaching jobs, but remained in the Denton area and often returned to alma mater to assist in coaching the aforementioned swim club.

One evening in 1939, Stroup decided to attend a movie stage show on campus. During that show Professor Floyd Graham announced a contest for lyrics to his recently composed school fight song. Coming from a family of musicians Stroup decided to toss his hat in the ring.

A few weeks later, his lyrics were performed with the other contest entrants. When the band finished playing Stroup’s rendition Graham was heard to have remarked, “*Can’t you just imagine the band marching down the field playing that?*” Several months passed before the final verdict was made on the fight sign, but there was never any doubt that Stroup’s rendition would be selected.

To this day his lyrics for “Fight, North Texas” are the schools official fighting anthem played at all athletic events.

A few years later, Stroup was forced to leave Texas as he was yet another young man swept up into combat during World War II. When he returned home, he went searching for new pastures. His travels lead him to Wyoming where he accepted a job as the PE teacher and swim coach.

Upon arriving in Laramie, Stroup found another school that lacked a proper fight song. In honor of the University's 60th year, he decided to create his own. Using lyrics from the already popular tune Ragtime Cowboy Joe, he unveiled the new fight song as part of a larger varsity show. Like his past work, it was an immediate hit and remains in use to this day.

One thing is for sure, when Stroup took over the team he had his swimmers singing a different tune. No longer did they have to tolerate beatdowns, they could stand their ground and fight.

Despite the changing culture, the Cowboys remained outmatched in terms of talent and would have to pick their battles preying on Colorado's weaknesses.

Wyoming's biggest advantage was on the boards where they had a true elderstatement in the 25 year old Harold Rollins. As a freshman, he was the one of the only bright spots for a miserably bad 1942 Cowboys team. After serving in the Navy Air Corps, he returned to school alongside his 28 year old brother, Carl. Together they were a fearsome duo for the football team.

Using his years of experience over Colorado diver Downing, Rollins snagged the victory. It was a tough lesson for Downing in his first collegiate meet. At East High School things came easy to him. He was an unbeatable diving ace, whose skills on the plank assisted in the Angels winning the Denver High School Championship his senior year. The adversity would continue for Downing in his rookie season as he struggled to find consistency, but by the end of the season his hard work would pay dividends.

*Downing Diving in HS (1946)*



The only other win for the Cowboys came in the 150 backstroke as Dick Ready did not live up to his name as he was caught napping against Wyoming's Van Nest.



*Racing in Half Acre Pool, 1947*

The Buffs ran away with the freestyle events. Before the war, the duo of Vandapool/Merrifield were the salt and pepper of freestyle. They both had different skill sets, but together were unbeatable. In 1947, there was a new dominant pairing in Lepman and Eastman.

Lepman, like Merrifield, would serve as the team's top sprinter while Eastman would assume the role of a discount Vandapool as the distance specialist. Following that formula, Lepman won the 50 and 100 freestyle and Eastman won the 220 freestyle and 440 freestyle. They both assisted in sweeping the relays as the Buffs once again prevailed over the Cowboys.

#### Meet Line Score

Event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Colorado	6	6	8	4	6	4	8	6	6	54
Wyoming	0	3	1	5	3	5	1	3	0	21

#### Denver 15, Colorado 60 - Jan 29, 1947

The University of Denver swim team is inextricably linked to the CU swim team. The Pioneers were the first in-state collegiate competition for the inaugural Buffs team in 1925. Led by a brash and confident Coach Johnson, Denver might have beaten the Buffs if not for a string of disastrous injuries before and during the meet.

Since that meeting two decades prior, the two programs diverged. During that time, while the Buffs asserted themselves as a swimming power along the front range, the Pioneers struggled to even field a team. After a decade-long absence an extremely small squad was fielded sporadically throughout the 1930s before disappearing entirely following the 1937 season.

The common denominator in a swim team failing to gain long term traction at DU was the lack of an on campus swimming pool. It is a problem that the Colorado School of Mine could relate all to well. However, while Mines was able to generally secure local swimming venues, the Pioneers had a much more challenging task securing space for practice and meets in the limited and popular downtown pools.

The simple solution would be to build a new on campus pool, but a pool was not the only athletic facility that the University of Denver had neglected for decades. They lagged far behind their university peers as they lacked any sort of on campus gymnasium. There were calls for improvement of the athletic facilities before the war, but those demands turned from a whisper to a roar following the conclusion of the conflict.

Chet Nelson of the Rocky Mountain News best summed up the furious desire for an indoor athletic facility in his aptly named 1947 article titled: Needed: A Fieldhouse.

*"You sit in the dentist chair and the man in white says, 'We need a Fieldhouse'. Around the barber shop the talk goes: 'What D.U. should do the first thing is build an indoor arena'. Big Citizen and little citizen, old grad and eager youth, doctor, lawyer, baker and bartender - they yearn for the day when Denver, as a city, has adequate facilities for a modern athletic program. And they wonder about the development plans at the University of Denver."*

The University of Denver community's prayers were answered later that year as the school announced that they would be adding a new fieldhouse largely due to a clever cost cutting solution.

The plan was remarkably simple: rather than build a brand new fieldhouse from the ground up, they could just buy an already existing structure from the United

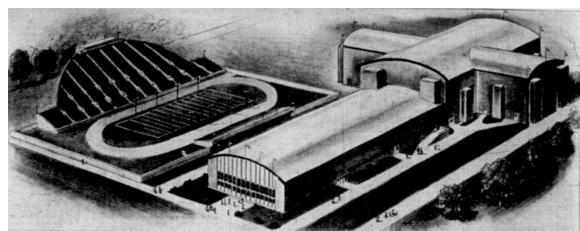
States military. Across the country there were hundreds of temporary hangers and training facilities that no longer had any use.

The scheme was dreamt up and volunteered by Max Cook, an aviation editor for the Scripps-Howards Newspapers who got the ball rolling by acquiring a Zeppelin hangar. The University administration loved Cook's idea and ran with it, looking for other structures that might fit their needs. Eventually, they opted to not use Cook's hanger but instead to purchase a drill house from the Farragut, Idaho Naval base. The building was selected because of its more extensive facilities.

The structure would make up part of the Fieldhouse which would be located across from the football stadium. It would house a 14,000 seat basketball arena in addition to 20 classrooms and a swimming pool. In the fall of 1947, ground was broken on the facilities and it was hoped that construction would be completed in just five months for the cost of \$500,000.

Although half a million dollars was no small price, equivalent to around 7 million today, it was surprisingly similar to what it cost CU to build the men's gymnasium two decades prior. In 1925, for a much smaller project, budget overruns and a strike ballooned the cost to nearly \$400,000 which also equates to around 7 million in modern terms.

*Artists Rendering of Denver Fieldhouse (1947)*



In a classic case of which came first: the pool or the swim team, the Pioneers decided to christen a new team a year before construction began on the Fieldhouse. The DU athletic department likely anticipated the addition of the pool in the near future and decided to get a squad off the ground sooner rather than later.

Similar to Colorado's hire of Bradley, DU opted to fill the position internally as they pegged the assistant coach for the football and baseball team Paul McClung

to lead the charge. As it would so happen, the connection between Coach Bradley and McClung ran much deeper. Both had been star players on the gridiron for CU. In fact McClung was a player that Bradley had coached. During the war, both men also served in the Navy, with McClung lucky to escape with his life following an explosion of a depth charge that occurred while his submarine was on patrol duty in the Atlantic

*Paul McClung (1942)*



After the war, both returned to state to coach college football and were on opposing sidelines as the Buffs played the Pioneers in the fall of 1946. The game would ultimately end in a 13-13 tie following a 40 yard field goal miss by Colorado. Now a few months later, the two mens' paths would cross yet again in Boulder at the Carlson Pool.

Although their backgrounds were the same and both had to manage fresh units, the result was not nearly as close as their previous football game. For the entirety of the meet, Paul's swimmers never McClung to a lead as the Buffs battered their in-state foes. They refused to surrender any points beyond one second place finish in the breaststroke and some scattered third places.

*1947 DU Swim Team*



Colorado followed an identical playbook as they did against Wyoming as Eastman and Lepman swept the freestyles and Herbst captured the breaststroke. This time after a defeat against the Cowboys, Alderman returned to the top of the podium in the backstroke with an unremarkable 2:13.

While it may not have been the result McClung had hoped for, the most important thing was that the team was back in operation and competing in formal meets again. Although he would abandon the team after just one year for greener pastures as the head baseball coach at DU, greater things were on the horizon for the Pioneers.

#### **Meet Line Score**

<i>Event</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Denver</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Colorado</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>60</i>
<b>Colorado 33, Nebraska 48 - Feb 1, 1947</b>									

It had been many moons since the Buffs had made the treacherous journey across state lines to the Nebraskan cornfields. They had met just two times before. In their first encounter Colorado had ambushed Nebraska in their home pool scoring a 16 point win.

Not a soul from that Colorado team remained to recount the splendor of that upset. But the same was not true for the Cornhuskers. Les Oldfield, but a freshman at the time, had watched helplessly on the sidelines as the visiting Buffs stormed into their house and had emerged victorious in 1940.

The following year, Oldfield helped his Huskers return the favor with a 19 point drubbing in Boulder. Oldfield was spectacular in his main event, the 150 yard backstroke. He ripped off a time of 1:52.6, drastically faster than the Buffs backstroke record at the time of 1:56.7 established by Ralph Christy in 1934.

*Les Oldfield Backstroking (1942)*



By Oldfields personal standards, that performance was actually slow. His best time of the season that year was a Big 8 conference record 1:45.5.

Now six years older and hardened by his time in combat, he returned to his school to compete in the sport he loved. Although time may have started to weather his once blazing speed, Oldfield was not going to allow Buffs history to repeat.

Joining Oldfield in his mission to stop the Buffs was budding superstar Marvin Grimm. Many of the swimmers that we have discussed throughout this book so far have been regional stars. Although exceptional talents in the state of Colorado or the Mountain West region, very few were ever in the upper echelon of talent at a national level. That is not the case for Grimm.

Grimm was a local boy through and through, growing up near Lincoln in the small neighboring town of Wilber, Nebraska. As a young man, his immense talent was readily apparent. In 1942 he was the preeminent swimmer at the Wilber City Championships winning the 50, 100 and 200 freestyle and getting second in the 50 breast and 50 backstroke.

Like many other young men, his swimming career took the back burner to World War II. Grimm joined the Navy where he was promoted to a radio operator aboard a ship stationed in the Pacific, because he, “he really knows his radio”.



*Grimm in the Navy (1945)*

Grimm’s primary responsibility as a radio operator was not combat related. He received news via radio from all over the world, decoded it, and typed out five copies to

distribute as a newspaper to the rest of the crew. It was a critical assignment as this amateur newspaper was the only means for the shipman to stay up to date with global events.

In addition to his radio skills, Grimm was probably selected for the job due to his fantastic speaking skills. In highschool, he earned praise at a dramatic reading competition with his three minute speech, “Interpretive Oratory, The Cry of Youth.” While on board, Grimm, a devout Christian, put his skills to use. In the summer of 1945, after being at sea for 33 months, he volunteered to deliver a Sunday Sermon that started as follows,

*“I am not a preacher. I am here on request not because I want to be. I feel that someone should accept the responsibility and step forward to weld us closer together and lead us closer to god.”*

He went on to discuss the difficulties of maintaining morality during wartime and the necessity of the higher cause that they were all a part of. Regardless of your religious beliefs, it was a powerful speech that illustrated the budding intellect and leadership that Grimm already possessed despite his youth.

A few months after that Sunday sermon, the atomic bombs known as Little Boy and Fat Man were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The result of those bombings was devastating, claiming the lives of over 200,000 people. Japanese leadership was forced to surrender less than a month after these attacks on September 2, 1945. The announcement of the surrender officially brought World War II to a close and meant that in the coming months Grimm and his fellow soldiers would return to shore and to their old lives.

Back in Nebraska, Grimm followed in his fathers and grandfathers footsteps by earning a degree of a Master Mason at Lodge no 64 before enrolling at the nearby University of Nebraska.

He exploded on the scene with an impressive performance in the schools winter intramural swim contest. Entered as an independent, not affiliated with any fraternity, Grimm stole the show by winning and breaking the record times in the 50, 100 and 220 freestyle. The previous times that Grimm beat had been standing for over a decade - since 1931. Supervising the

meet was new coach Hollie Lepley who was undoubtedly ecstatic for finding a generational talent.

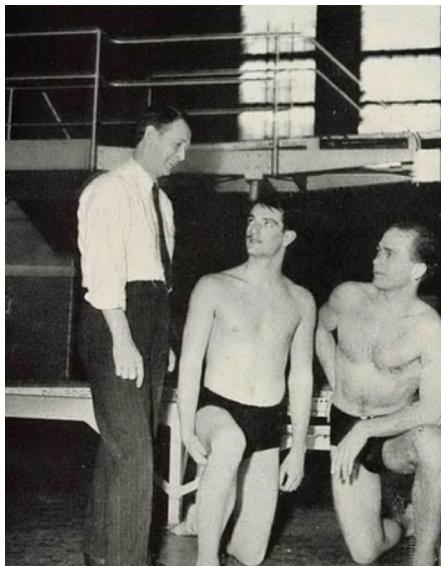
With Grimm and the veteran Oldfield, the Huskers already had a fairly imposing squad. Added to the mix was Roger Moore, an all-conference caliber diver, Conrad King a strong backstroker, and Dean Porter specializing in distance freestyle events.

Unfortunately for the Huskers, their first contest back in action was against a loaded University of Minnesota swim team. The Gopher splashes had a long history of success, regularly scoring points at the NCAA championships before the war. During wartime, as other programs were shuttered their team remained active and they reaped the benefits securing third place in 1943. It was the best finish by Minnesota up to that point and is tied with 1961 as the Gophers' best nationals performance.

Even as teams reassembled around the country with superior talent, Minnesota still remained at an advantage as they did not have to go through the difficulty of fielding a team with completely new swimmers and coaches.

They were coached by the legendary Niels Thorpe who was born in Denmark but emigrated to the United States at the onset of the first world war. He had been in charge of the Minnesota swim team since it was founded in 1920.

*Coach Thorpe and Son (Bill)*



On paper, this year's team was especially intimidating as it featured four former national high school champions. The crown jewel of which in Thorpe's eyes was likely his son Bill Thorpe who swam distance freestyle. However, the real wonderkid was freshman breaststroker Mel Ivonen who entered college with a national record 1:02.8 in the 100 breaststroke.

The Gophers expectations were through the roof as they kicked off their 1947 campaign on a roadtrip to the farming states of Iowa and Nebraska. Both meets were supposed to be easy tune ups before the grind of the Big 10 Conference schedule. Their first stop was in Ames to face the Cyclones. Little did they know they were walking directly into a trap.

The trap in question was a person: Roger Watts. Known in Iowa circles for his highschool titles at North Des Moines in the 220 freestyle and a half mile run in track, hardly anyone knew of him outside of the states borders.

That all changed at this meet. In his first collegiate competition ever Watts propelled Iowa State to a stunning 43-41 upset against Minnesota. He did so in dazzling fashion setting the pool record in the 220 with a 2:13.9 while also claiming titles in the 100 and 440 freestyle.

It was a powerful performance, from a true freshman no less, that snatched away the headlines from the impressive results of the Minnesota swimmers. Three Gophers broke team records including Ivonen, who set the national freshman record in the breaststroke.

Regardless, it was all a footnote to the coming out party of Roger Watts. A swimmer that would dominate the conference for years to come and would soon become a recurring foe to the Colorado swim team.

Facing Nebraska a few days later, Minnesota would not let themselves make the same mistakes by underestimating another midwestern foe. Even missing their top diver Evert Tornfelt, who had suffered a concussion after banging his head against the bottom of the pool against Iowa State, the Gophers eviscerated the Huskers in their home pool by 31 points.

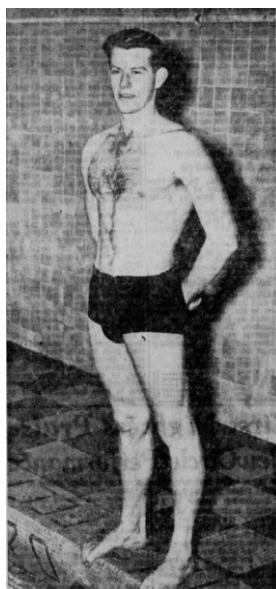
Grimm attempted to do his best Watts impersonation, winning the 100 freestyle and finishing second in the 50 freestyle. But it wasn't enough to get close to Minnesota as he was the only Husker to get first place in any event.

The loss boosted the Buffs' anticipation for stealing another road win in Nebraska. Sure, the Huskers had a lot of talent but they had proven that they were still far from being in the elite company of teams like Minnesota or Iowa State.

Prospects of the Buffs winning became even brighter as the meet got under way as an eager Husker disqualified their medley relay with an early departure. Eastman kept the team's momentum going by winning his fourth consecutive 220 freestyle against Nebraska's Porter.

That hot start though proved to be nothing more than a temporary mirage as the floor quickly gave out beneath them. Despite the team's best efforts, Colorado would not win another event the rest of the meet.

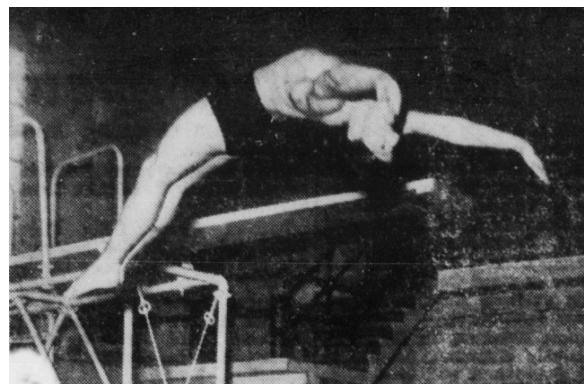
The Buffs ace Lepman was simply no match for the more talented Grimm. While Lepman was swimming royalty within the state of Colorado, he was a mere peasant in comparison to the speed that Grimm brought to the pool. In both the 50 and 100 freestyle Grimm breezed past him with times that a University of Colorado swimmer would not hit for decades.



*Marvin Grimm (1947)*

On the boards was reliable Summer Downing, who went as cold as winter, falling to third place behind Nebraska's Moore and Case. Even Herbst was unable to upend his Husker opponent in the breaststroker

*UNL's Roger Moore Diving (1947)*



In a changeup, the Buffs top backstroker was Ready and not Alderman. Even with the change both were still outpaced by Old man Oldfield. Despite the loss, it was a significant personnel adjustment for the Buffs who had struggled to find someone to hold down the event. While they would continue to get mixed results the rest of the season, it was now Ready's event to lose.

For Oldfield, the win in the backstroke was monumental. It proved that even at his older age and after a long down time he still had what it took to win.

The Huskers season from that point onwards was fairly mixed. Despite having Grimm to power them, they resided within a zone somewhere between a good and great team. They lost both of their dual meets against Iowa State and they were no match for the elite Big Ten teams they faced in Iowa and Minnesota. But they beat the rest of their below average conference mates. The result was an iffy 5-4 season that saw them register a distant second place at the conference meet to Watt and the Cyclones.

Without a true peer to challenge him, Grimm finished the season undefeated in the sprint freestyles events. Coach Lepley decided that Grimm should fly to the NCAA championship meet hosted at the University of Washington to see if he was the best swimmer in the nation. Departing on a completely different flight to the Pacific Northwest was his midwestern counterpart, Watts.

At the NCAA's, Grimm proved once and for all that he belonged amongst the elites. Although he did not make it back to finals in the 100 freestyle, he did earn a spot in the top heat of the 50 freestyle. His exact time from the meet doesn't exist, but we know that the event was won by Michigan's Richard Weinburg in 23.3 seconds. As for Grimm, he finished a few spots behind Weinburg, just barely missed the podium with the fourth best time in the nation.

Even though fourth place doesn't come with the glory of a medal, it did yield Nebraska two points. Those two points would be the only points scored by a Husker at NCAA's for two decades. More importantly, those two points allowed Nebraska to claim the title of the 13th best college swim team in the country, just ahead of their in-conference rival Iowa State who was only able to extract a single point from Watt's fifth place result.

Iowa State may have had the superior season and brought home yet another conference title, but at the end of the day Grimm and the Huskers had the last laugh.

### Meet Box Score

Event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Colorado	6	5	4	1	3	4	3	3	4	33
Nebraska	0	4	5	8	6	5	6	6	8	48

Colorado	RLY 220 50 DIVE 100 150 200 440 RLY PTS									
	FR FR		FR BK BR			FR				
Eastman	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	8
Lepman	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	1	7
Ready	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	5
Zaitz	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Herbst	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Ebaugh	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Gilmore	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Downing	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Alderman	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Bowers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	6	5	4	1	3	4	3	3	4	33

Wyoming	RLY 220 50 DIVE 100 150 200 440 RLY PTS									
	FR FR		FR BK BR			FR				
Grimm	0	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	2	12
Porter	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	8
Moore	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Oldfield	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	5

King	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	5
Case	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Campbell	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	3
Burr	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Branch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Draper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Greenburg	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	0	4	5	8	6	5	6	6	8	48

### Colorado 38, Colorado St 46 - Feb 8, 1947

At the onset of World War II, the Rams swim team was in a state of turmoil. They had lost their identity as a freestyle factory and regular conference contender. Gutted by the draft, they fielded their least competitive team since the early days of Coach Tompkins. The team was so depleted of talent that they refused to swim against Weber State in 1942 out of fear of inflicting even more embarrassment on the team.

In short terms, Colorado State was like a malfunctioning computer that desperately needed a reboot. The war provided that hard reset for the Rams. When Coach Tompkins reopened the team for business, he was pleasantly surprised by what he saw. Like the Buffs, Tompkins had received a blessing via the transfer portal in Jay Gruenfeld.

*Coach Tompkins (1947)*



Like Lepman, Gruenfeld was born in the suburbs of the Windy City. While he did not have nearly as esteemed of a highschool swimming career, he demonstrated enough talent to end up on the University of Illinois's team. The Fighting Illini were hardly one of the premier squads in the country, as they struggled to be respectable in the most competitive swimming conference: The Big Ten.

As strange as it might sound, the NCAA did not always award a team championship in swimming. For the first thirteen national championship meets, the results were solely meant to determine individual champions. During that time, “unofficial” champions were crowned based on their athletes’ points totals. Once the change was made to officially recognize a team champion in 1937, the Big Ten teams had dominated the standings.

In the eleven NCAA meets from 1937-1947 a Big Ten school took home the title nine times. Michigan won five of those, while Ohio State took home four of their own. During that span Iowa, Northwestern, Minnesota and Michigan State all had top 5 finishes. With all these teams excelling, the Illini were relegated to the lower rungs of the conference.

Gruenfeld arrived at the University of Illinois via train at the mere age of 16. On his trip there, “*They came to Kankakee, the train stopped and people got on and said that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor and by the time that I got to the fraternity house some of the guys had already packed their bags and had gone off to enlist.*”

Unlike those other men, Gruenfeld did not immediately withdraw, instead opting to continue his education while being involved in ROTC. He swam for the freshman team in 1942, before joining the varsity team the next season.

The 1943 Illini team was in a perilous state; it was hamstrung by the draft and a hoard of ineligibilities. It was barely hanging on at all. Only five of the eight lettermen that began the season were available in February. Things were so bad that they had to field their smallest team in history with just ten men and not a single diver against their vaunted rivals Northwestern.

Coach Ed Manely believed that what remained of his team was a shell of its former self, “*It used to be a madhouse around here during afternoon practice, but today there is no spirit in the boys. They don’t have their hearts in swimming*”

Before the Northwestern meet even started, they had already conceded eight points to the Wildcats due their lack of swimmers. With such a hill to climb, the result

was going to be predictably poor. The team’s woes spelled opportunity for Gruenfeld. With options scarce, the unheralded sophomore found himself in the mix to be the team’s primary backstroker. The only thing that stood in his way was fellow sophomore Keith Kerr.

*Jay Gruenfeld (1943)*



At the start of the season, Kerr and Gruenfeld were neck and neck in the backstroke. However, that all changed when a friend suggested to Kerr that he should go shake the hand of the Alma Mater statue. The evening before the Northwestern meet he, “*made the lonely trek out to the auditorium and clambered up the pedestal and clasped the alma mater and whispered bring me luck.*”

Whether it was magic or placebo, the statue granted his wish. That meet he edged out Gruenfeld by four inches, and he followed that up with another win against Purdue with a first place and a personal best 1:43.9.



*Alma Mater Statue (2014)*

It was no doubt disappointing for Gruenfeld to watch his teammate surpass him, but he had more pressing matters on his plate. At the conclusion of the season on April 15th, 1943, he was finally pulled into service.

Gruenfeld was fairly unique among his peers as he was incredibly eager for combat. He spent fourteen weeks in basic training in Spartanburg, North Carolina before getting his chance to see battle in New Zealand, and then Papua New Guinea.

While in the Pacific working primarily as a patrolman, he recounts having witnessed many horrendous and tragic scenes. From fields full of scattered corpses to thirteen Japanese soldiers taking their own lives in caves rather than surrender.

Interestingly, Gruenfeld noted that the most scared he ever wasn't during one of these incidents, rather it was during a trek through the wilderness to recover an injured soldier. He was making his way through the brush when, *"All of a sudden a big animal hit his leg and then another one hit the other side and there were squeals. I had walked into a herd of wild pigs. And they had just frozen there until I was right there in the middle of them. And I did not yell - I screamed! And I had about a half a mile to go through there and I was all feared out."*

He wrote in extensive detail about these experiences and more in his excellent and very unique memoir titled Commissioned in Battle. His time in active combat was cut short after incurring five wounds during the Ipo Dam offensive in May of 1945. Six months later, the war was over and Gruenfeld returned to life in Illinois with a new perspective and a litany of stories.

He returned to the Illini swim team, but with a fully stocked roster he found himself on the bottom of the backstroke depth chart behind the likes of Dave Jensen and William Keller. The only meet that we know he saw action in was the final regular season matchup against Iowa. He placed third in the 150 backstroke finishing behind Iowa's Dick Main and his teammate Tony Konstant.

Gruenfeld spent the summer in Champagne relaxing and playing intramural softball with his fraternity. He flashed some sneaky pop smashing a homerun in a game against the Gym Annex 2 team. He also participated in a Water Carnival hosted at Urbana Park where he followed Philip Andrew's underwater escape act with a demonstration of how to swim backstroke.

That fall, Gruenfeld decided to move out west to Fort Collins to pursue his passion in forestry at Colorado State. The change in environment had the two fold advantage of bringing him closer to nature while also elevating him from a swimming pauper in the talent rich Big Ten to swimming icon in Colorado.

Gruenfeld wasn't the only weapon that Coach Tompkins had at his disposal. He also had an all conference freestyler Jim McCaskill and strong breastroker in Woody Hite. The trio formed an imposing core that strangely mirrored the makeup of the Buffs top three in Lepman, Eastman and Herbst.

Coach Tompkins & his Star Trio



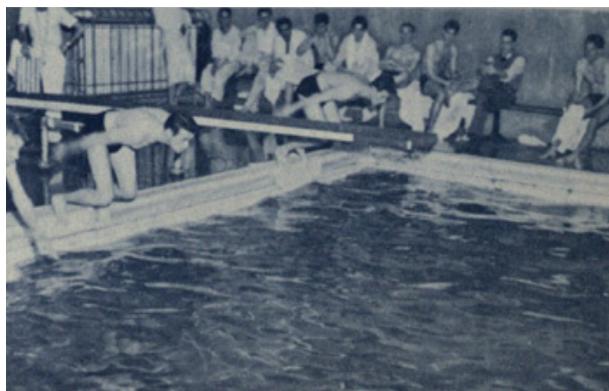
The question of which group was truly superior would be tested in Fort Collins on a day that featured three different minor sport competitions between Colorado and Colorado State.

The Rams ran away with the medley relay to kick off the meet. At the behest of Coach Bradley, the Buffs basically conceded the relay to the Rams utilizing Ready, Ebaugh and Zaitz. It was part of a bold strategy to save CU's top swimmers for their individual events.

The strategy bore nothing but rotten fruit for Eastman as he saw the previously undefeated streak snapped by

McCaskill in the 220 freestyle. Later in the meet, he took another loss to McCaskill in the 440 freestyle leaving him without a first place finish to his name for the first time that season.

*Swimmers Competing at Farmers Pool (1947)*



Lepman, meanwhile, performed on par with his standards beating out Colorado State's Abshire in the 50 freestyle before beating him again in the 100 freestyle with a season best time of 58.1 seconds.

The wheels really came off the wagon during diving. In a tight contest, the Rams Hall won the event with 92.26 points ahead of his teammate Remington 91.36.

Downing finished third with 87.5 points, his season low. The event wasn't without its fair share of controversy, as the Buffs believed that some of the scoring decisions were the result of some good old fashioned hometown favoritism by the judges

*CSU's Diver, Hall*



Colorado's performance didn't improve at all in the two stroke events. Gruenfeld, a registered weapon inside and out of the water, claimed another victim in the water as he gunned down Ready in the backstroke to the tune of a 1:54.9. Meanwhile Herbst was bested in the breaststroke for a second straight time falling to the Rams Hite.

In the end, despite salvaging a win in the freestyle relay, the Buffs were categorically outclassed. It appeared that outside of Lepman Colorado didn't have the same firepower as the Rams.

When asked by reporters about the frustrating loss and whether the biased diving judging was a significant factor Coach Bradley responded, "*Post Mortems don't win meets.*"

The message was clear: the Buffs were not going to linger on what went wrong at the meet and play the blame game. There was no way that they could rewrite the past, the only thing that they could do is control how they performed in the future.

#### Meet Box Score

Event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Colorado	0	3	8	1	6	7	3	3	7	38
Colorado St	7	6	1	8	3	6	6	6	3	46

Colorado	RLY 220 50 DIVE 100 150 200 440 RLY PTS									Total
	FR	FR	FR	BK	BR	FR	FR	FR	Total	
Lepman	0	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	1.75	11.75
Eastman	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Gilmore	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1.75	4.75
Ready	x	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Herbst	x	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Bowers	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1.75	2.75
Zaitz	x	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.75	1.75
Flower	0	x	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Downing	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Michael	0	0	0	x	0	0	0	0	0	1
Alderman	0	0	0	0	0	x	0	0	0	0
Powloski	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	x	0	0
Total	0	3	8	1	6	7	3	3	7	38

Colorado St	RLY 220 50 DIVE 100 150 200 440 RLY PTS									Total
	FR	FR	FR	BK	BR	FR	FR	FR	Total	
McCaskill	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	10
Gruenfield	2	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	8

<i>Hite</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	5
<i>Hall</i>	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
<i>Abshire</i>	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	5
<i>Roehl</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
<i>Remington</i>	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
<i>Edwards</i>	2	0	0	0	x	0	0	0	1	3
<i>Burns</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
<i>Monninger</i>	0	0	x	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<i>Brisby</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<i>Total</i>	6	6	1	8	3	6	6	6	4	46

### Denver 22, Colorado 61 - Feb 14, 1947

In desperate need of a bounceback win, the Buffs made the short trip to Denver to take on the Pioneers once again. For the past two meets, Colorado had been beaten down by two stronger opponents in hostile environments. That would not be the case for the third and final meet in their road schedule.

While the Pioneers were starting to make marginal strides in their first season back, they were nowhere prepared for a Colorado team that brought its absolute A-game to the meet. There must have been something in the water at the Denver Public Bathouse that day or maybe the Buffs just needed to take out their frustrations. Whatever the case, the team swam on a level that had not been previously seen that season.

Dick Lepman was a monster in the water, shredding the opposition in record times. In the 100 freestyle he knocked several full seconds off his previous best mark to arrive at a team record 54.5 second time. It was an outstanding performance markedly better than the 58 second time from a week prior and far faster than one hit wonder Allan Rogers record of 57.3.

His real momentous feat came before that in the 50 freestyle as Lepman roared through the water at a pace of 24.2 seconds nearly a whole second faster than Harold Daniel's astonishing performance against Weber State just before the war.

Both of those performances paled in comparison to the 150 yards that Dick Ready swam in backstroke. Since assuming his duty as the team's top backstroker, Ready had yet to win the event.

That ended against the Pioneers as he maneuvered the pool in a transcendent 1:50; easily the school record and far faster than the previous conference mark. A week prior, he had lost to Gruenfeld who swam four seconds slower.

It is such a radical and uncharacteristic improvement from Ready that we as historical observers are obligated to call into question the integrity of the times from this meet. The times that he and Lepman recorded in this meet were far faster than their times before or after the meet. What is more likely? That these swimmers out of the blue summoned god-like performances that they never replicated again, or that either the pool that they competed in was not regulation or they benefited from over eager timers.

It is our professional opinion that the latter is more likely to be true. As such, the times registered by Lepman and Ready, while impressive regardless of circumstances, will be regarded as unofficial by this book.

The other oddity of this meet is the absence of Eastman. Perhaps he wanted to take a meet off to reset mentally after the embarrassing double defeat he experienced against the Buffs. Either way his absence allowed a few unheralded Colorado swimmers to see the water.

Robert Powalski filled in for the 220 freestyle. The senior from Seattle, Washington largely rode the bench all season, rarely if ever showing up in the final meet results. He had not contributed a single point to the Buffs all year; the closest he got was the week prior when he landed a fourth place result in the 440 freestyle.

With Eastman out of the picture for the meet, the 220 freestyle was suddenly his to lose. He did not succeed in beating the Pioneer's Thomson but he did get to end his collegiate career with second place points and a win over teammate Frank Zaitz. Despite this being his only contribution of the season, his effort against Denver was enough to earn him a varsity letter.

The other temporary replacement was Lawrence Flower. Like Powloski, he was a senior that had spent the majority of the year on mop duty. However, while Powloski rarely, if ever, saw any action, Flower swam

in most meets picking up low end podium points in the distance freestyle events. In the 1947 season he had registered: two second places, two third places and a fourth place finish. Talent wise, he was the definition of a third place swimmer that could get better results if the competition was on the weaker side.

*Lawrence Flower (1947)*



In perhaps the greatest testament to the skewed results from this meet, Flower swam like an all conference athlete. He destroyed Eastman's top time by a large margin and cracked 6 minutes in the 440 freestyle with a laughably swift time of 5:49.8. There was just no way that a swimmer of Flower's caliber was able to move that fast. Even if the time was dubious, the end result was not, as Flower finally got to experience the epic high that comes with winning an event.

At the end of the day, the Buffs had gotten the feel good team victory that they were craving and it was a good thing because they definitely needed to get their confidence back if they wanted to unseat the Rams in their second matchup.

This would be the final time that either program would compete against each other in a dual meet for two decades. In the coming months, the University of Colorado athletics would once again change conferences, this time hopping the midwestern Big 8 conference. With the change, the Buffs no longer had room for the Pioneers on the schedule, and they wouldn't meet again until 1967 under much different circumstances.

The departure of Colorado sent tremendous shockwaves throughout the conference, as schools like Denver worried about the survival of the conference all together. In their state of panic, the University of Denver decided that a complete overhaul of their athletic's was required.

Just two weeks after this meet, Quigg Newton, the chairman of DU's board, announced the creation of a special athletic commission to study their situation and make recommendations. Newton declared, *"I feel that Colorado's entry in the Mid-West Conference gives us a big challenge. We will have to meet that challenge wholeheartedly, with every resource at our command or drop into comparative athletic obscurity. We have been caught on our limb and we better do something about it."*

And do something they did. They completed the new Denver Fieldhouse the following year and placed more emphasis on all sports on their campus. No team benefited more from this shift in athletics than their swim team. Over the next several decades, the water Pioneers would steadily find their footing and eventually even surpass Colorado altogether.

#### **Meet Line Score**

<i>Event</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Denver</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Colorado</i>	<i>*</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>51</i>

\*score discretion

#### **Colorado St 41, Colorado 43 - Feb 22, 1947**

There was no conference championship meet held in 1947. There is no specified reason as to why there wasn't a meet. We can deduce that two factors played an effect on this. The first was the ongoing recovery from World War II meant that most schools were in their first season back in competition. Coaches and Athletic Departments had enough on their plates rebuilding teams that none were interested in the undertaking required to host a conference meet. The second factor was the ongoing exit of Colorado from the Big Seven. The school had announced its decision to leave for the Big 8 earlier in the winter of 1946. The Buffs hadn't officially left yet but their decision, as discussed previously, had riled up its conference mates.

Possibly to the point that they wouldn't entertain hosting a conference meet with the involvement of Colorado.

Without a conference meet to crown an outright champion, reporters set their sights on this meet as a sort of de facto championship. Both the Rams and Buffs had gone undefeated against the likes of Denver and Wyoming. With their previous win against Colorado, the Rams could complete a perfect season and claim conference title. However, a win by the Buffs would muddy the water. It would mean both teams would have the same head to head and conference records. In that sense both teams would have an argument as champions.

Before the meet started, the Buffs were dealt a serious blow. Eastman, for a second straight meet, was unavailable. Like the meet a week before, we don't know why Eastman was sidelined, but it would send ripples throughout the meet. Could Colorado still find a way to win without their second best swimmer? They would need lower level contributors to swim at their peak form if they wanted to stand a chance.

Luckily for Coach Bradley and the Buffs, Eastman's teammates answered the call, specifically in the 300 medley relay to start the meet. A crew of Ready, Ebaugh and Zaitz put forth a stellar effort to snatch a win away from the jaws of the Big Three of the Rams with a time of 3:37.8.

In their prior matchup with Colorado State, Coach Bradley had neglected the medley relay and it cost them dearly. With the win to start the meet the Buffs were firmly in the driving seat.

With Eastman out, Bradley had a tough decision to make. Should he stick with Lepman in the sprints, in which he had been dominant all season, or should he pull Lepman from the 50 freestyle and have him swim the 220 freestyle? Lepman was practically guaranteed to win the 50 and 100 freestyle. For the gambit to make a profit, Bradley would need Lepman to win the 100 and 220 freestyle and a Colorado swimmer to win the 50 freestyle or the 440 freestyle.

Bradley opted to roll the dice and spice things up, gambling that his best freestyler would win the 220

freestyle and that the team's depth would be there to back him up. The gamble was massive. Never before had a Colorado coach made such a radical change at championship (like) meet. Needless to say it paid off.

Lepman bolted past the Ram's McCaskill in the 220 freestyle and then finished his assignment with a win in the 100 freestyle with a 57.9. The Buffs got decimated in the 440 freestyle as one of the stars of the DU meet Powloski lost his magical touch and was relegated to third place. That meant the deciding race in the scheme was in the hands of senior Keith Gilmore and the 50 freestyle.

Born in small town Idaho, Gilmore had spent the entire season lurking in the shadows. While Lepman was out there kicking opponents behinds and making headlines like Batman, Gilmore was right there beside him as an underappreciated sidekick akin to Robin. Every meet that season Gilmore had swam in the 50 freestyle and finished one spot below Lepman, usually that meant he was the second best sprinter at any given meet that season.

But not today. With the events reshuffled for the first and only time in his brief collegiate career, Gilmore took center stage. He would not disappoint.

Gilmore scorched the water underneath him as he finished the 50 freestyle just a few clicks below the all time mark in 25.2 seconds. Disregarding the timing from the DU meet, this was actually the Buffs fastest time of the season in the event, .1 faster than Lepman's time at Colorado State.

*Keith Gilmore (1947)*



It was the best possible swim for a fantastic individual. Gilmore would graduate a few months later with his degree in Mechanical Engineering and would move back to Idaho where he used his degree to design dams