

December, 1961

On Wednesday, September 27, 1961, Fred Murphy was officially appointed head swimming coach at the University of Colorado. Murphy's takeover of the team was just a small part of a great change happening across campus. As a decade, the 1960s were debatably the most transformative years in the history of the university. Indeed, a graduate from the class of 1905 could walk around Old Main and the Norlin Quad in 1959 and find that not much had changed, aside from a few new buildings and the trees having gotten older. The same couldn't be said for that same 1905 graduate walking around campus a decade later in 1969. The University, by the end of the decade, had more closely resembled that of today's school. A graduate from 2023 could walk campus from 1969 and experience a similar familiar feeling. Between 1963 and 1966, CU underwent almost a complete turnover of governing board, presidents, vice presidents, deans and department chairs. The 1960s saw the departure of most of the war-era veteran faculty, including our very own Doc Balch. The new heads of staff oversaw grand projects that turned the campus and school into what we know it as today. On February 24, 1962, the Board of Regents approved a ten million dollar investment in student housing. If you know your CU lore well, you will of course know these were the Kittredge dorms.



Model of Kittredge (1962)

There were intangible cultural changes sweeping Boulder as well. Voices and movements gripped the campus in a rejection of anything that resembled Ancient CU. By the end of the sixties, deans of men and deans of women had vanished. Radio and television broadcasts gradually switched from calling the University "UCB" to "CU-Boulder." Student governments saw revolutions, and simpler things like the rule of men not being allowed on the upper floors of women's dorms and sorority houses were ousted. And it seemed that on an almost annual basis, CU was ranked top five in the nation as the best party school.

By the 1963-64 academic year, plans were well in the making to expand the University outside of just the Boulder campus. The University of Colorado Medical Center in Denver had facilities in the works, in particular a new Colorado General Hospital. In 1966, the University legislature approved \$50,000 for a new Colorado Springs campus. Norlin Library was renovated and expanded in 1964, turning the famous semi circle glass windows into an interior wall. Smiley Court, the first building in East Campus, was constructed in 1963, followed shortly by the University Memorial Center in 1964. The infamous engineering building broke ground in 1965 and the Williams Village Towers began rising in 1966.



Norlin Library (Pre Renovation)

Coach Murphy inherited a veteran team that was just off the streak of eight broken varsity records the previous season. Ralph Bastian and Max Franz were elected captains for the 1962 season. Franz held the number two conference mark in the 1500 meter freestyle and the varsity record in the 220 and 440 freestyles. Bastian was the third CU swimmer to ever qualify for the NCAA championships and held the varsity record in the 100 breaststroke. McElroy held a lock in the freestyle events and Tony Wilson was the team's medley specialist. Murphy described Wilson as a "great team man." The top draft picks were sophomores Kieth Shaw, a breaststroke specialist, and Dave Bailey. Murphy planned on putting Bailey into the sprint slots, as there wasn't a clear taker in the 50 and 100 freestyles this season.



Fred Murphy (1961)

The ten man freshman team this year was headed by former Yale swimmer, Bob Geigengack. A member of the Yale swim team from 1956 to 1960, Geigengack caught the tail end of the legendary Yale swimming win streak. Under the direction of head coach Robert Kiputh, "for 16 years, from 1945 to 1961, through 201 consecutive dual meets, the Bulldogs were untouchable." Kiputh was famous for his integration of dry-land workouts into swimming, and no doubt Geigengack planned to carry that tradition to the CU freshman team.

The Colorado team fared particularly well in the Saturday morning prelims at the Wyoming relays, winning four of the five heats they entered in. However, that success didn't translate into finals, the highest CU relay placing third. In the 150 yard butterfly relay, Tony Wilson and Colorado State swimmer Elkins clocked in the same time, 1:21.4. However, the State relay was credited with second place due to Wilson failing to touch the pool end first. Had Colorado placed second in the event, they would have taken third place overall at the relays. Instead, Colorado State took third by just a single point.

Murphy later stated that he was "very pleased with the team's showing, especially this early in the season. They've demonstrated a very healthy attitude so far." The Wyoming Relays was only an inkling of what was to come in 1962, as the Front Range would be dominated by the Cowboys and Pioneers' swim teams this season.

January, 1962

Like almost all other athletic coaches at CU at the time, Coach Murphy's team was hampered by injuries. Tony Wilson, the team's primary medley swimmer, was out for the rest of the season with an injured lung. Junior breastroker Henry Wise stepped in to replace Wilson.

Like a spiritual handshake on the Front Range, Utah State and Kansas met at the middle grounds in Boulder for the first meet of CU's

1962 season. Utah State was still finding their footings as a collegiate swim team, while Kansas was fresh off a third place finish at the 1961 conference. It was relatively obvious how the scoring would play out. Coach Murphy described the USU team as “not particularly strong,” remembering their victory over the Aggies in Logan the prior year. Regardless of Wilson’s injury, the 1962 team was one of the most well balanced bunch in recent seasons. Colorado swimmer or diver placed third or higher in all but one of the individual events. Franz and McElroy were the usual duet in the distance freestyle events, and although they struggled in the 220 freestyle, they swept the 440.

Steven Helm was a freestylist who hasn’t been mentioned much yet. He was one of the nine swimmers who participated in every meet last year in 1961, and he looked poised to do the same this year. Helm placed third in the 50 freestyle with a time of 25.1. It was significantly faster than David Bailey, who was expected to be the Buff’s sprint freestyle connoisseur at the beginning of the season.



Max Franz & Mel McElroy (1962)

For unknown reasons, McElroy dipped his toes into diving this year, placing last in the diving event with 105.9 points. Perhaps it was due to the 1962 team only having one diver, Bob Zika? Or maybe McElroy wanted to diversify his portfolio away from distance freestyle? Either way, it was free points for CU. Wrapping up the individual races was Keith Shaw finishing second in the 200 breaststroke with a time of 2:34.1. CU split the meet, dropping a sixteen point decision to Kansas but pulling ahead of Utah State by thirteen points.

Matt, I cannot find anything useful about these air force relays. Skipping for now

Entering the next meet against Northern Colorado, there was an unusual turn in events. Likely due to a scheduling conflict, the meet was hosted in the decrepit Carlson Gymnasium Pool. By this point in its lifetime, Carlson Pool had poor circulation in the water, resulting in a murky lagoon. The team still practiced there, but by 1962 had resorted to hosting meets in the women’s pool down the street.

The 1962 Bears team was a shell of their former self. High turnover and graduation losses from the 1961 RMC championship team put the UNC swim team in big trouble. In the overcast Carlson Pool, Colorado nearly swept the Bears, winning ten of eleven events. The only event to fall to UNC was the 50 freestyle, with Bear swimmer Dill touching the wall at 24.9 seconds. Franz was a double winner for CU, placing first in both the 220 and 440 freestyles. McElroy continued his diving campaign, placing second with an improved 122.8 points. McElroy also took second in the distance freestyles behind Franz to keep up the point production. The other Buff to win two events was Wise in the individual medley and breaststroke events. Other CU breadwinners to account for are Anderson in the 100 freestyle, Fitkin in the 200 backstroke and Zika in the diving.

Shaw, the new sophomore breastroker, nearly upset the team’s star in the 200 breaststroke,

only losing by .6 seconds to Henry Wise. To add insult to injury, CU also entered the freshman team into the 400 freestyle relay. To the surprise of everyone spectating, the freshman team not only beat UNC's relay, but CU's own varsity team as well. The conclusion of the competition marked CU's largest margin of victory over UNC since 1947.

The following weekend saw two stacked teams come pay a visit to Boulder. The first were the Academy swimmers. In a rare case of Air Force personnel having boots on the ground, CU was trounced by a score of 58-37. Academy swimmers won the first eight events and were up 56-14. McElroy and Franz swam circles around the AFA swimmers in the 440 freestyle while Wise and Shaw narrowly took first and second in the 200 breaststroke. A 2.2 second win in the final relay brought CU up to a respectable 37 points. The cracks were really starting to show in the sprint freestyle events and the 200 butterfly for CU. There wasn't a dedicated flyer on the team and the usual swimmers in the 50 and 100 free-style couldn't win races against good teams.

Exhausted, the Colorado swimmers slept off the night and prepared for the competition against Wyoming the next day. The 1962 Cowboy team was a true force to be reckoned with. In 1961, Ray Chinn took over as head coach and led the team through a solid season. You had studs like Jerry Lipman in the butterfly and the freestylist Jim Wysocki setting records and winning events left and right. The 1962 team was much deeper, with most of the core of the '61 team being retained and surrounded by quick sophomores. A somewhat parallel story to that of the 1961 and 1962 CU teams, but the ceiling was much higher for the Cowboys. In the medley relay alone, the Buffs finished fourteen seconds behind, while Dennis Brittain swam circles around Max Franz in the 220 freestyle. Wyoming won the next six races in a row before Brittain took to the blocks again. He set a new pool record in the 440 freestyle, lowering the old mark by close to two seconds. The final score of the meet was 23-70, marking Colorado's worst defeat against Wyo-

ming ever up to date.

February, 1961

The remaining half of the 1962 season consisted of an away trip to Iowa and Nebraska, followed by a hodgepodge of various dual meets within Colorado. The CU team posted a 2-3 record at the beginning of their trip to Big Eight territory on February 2nd. The powerful Iowa State team had returned to heights of former glory, putting up 61 points to CU's 31. Only three Colorado swimmers managed to win an event, Fitkin, McElroy and Wise.

Heading back west, Coach Murphy took his swimmers to face the ex freshman swim coach at CU, Dick Klass. For Klass, the last freshman team he coached in 1959 had grown up to become seniors on the '62 team. It must have been a strange feeling, and perhaps he was eager to beat his former students. At the onset, the Nebraska 400 medley relay team was disqualified after the third man jumped too early. The Cornhusker's actual time of 3:59.9 did not count against Colorado's 4:31.5.

The situation in the sprint freestyle events was dire. Nebraska performed a clean sweep of both events, putting up times that the 1958 CU team would have no problem beating. Colorado's best events continued to be the 220 and 440 freestyle, as the duo of Franz and McElroy proved too quick to overcome for the Cornhuskers. Entering the 400 freestyle relay, the score stood at 46-42. The 7 points awarded to the winning freestyle team would determine the decision of the meet. That honor was ultimately bestowed upon the Cornhusker relay team who finished in 3:47.7.

The upcoming weekend was just as busy for the CU swimmers. Colorado State and Utah drove to Boulder for a double dual matchup late in the afternoon of February 9th. The team was hampered yet again by the scholastic ineligibility of Henry Wise. The Iowa State and Nebraska road trip would be Wise's last competition of

the 1962 season. As the existing backup for Tony Wilson, who was out due to illness, the Colorado team was now on its third string backup in the individual medley and breaststroke. Keith Shaw stepped in to become the team's primary breaststroker and individual medley specialist. The Colorado Daily newspaper described Shaw as "able to carry off the breaststroke, but is not listed as a threat in the medley."



Bob Zika (water), Ralph Bastian, Henry Wise (water), Ken Nestler, Keith Shaw, Jerry Urbach

Coach Murphy expressed little hope in beating CSU, but called the matchup with Utah a "toss up." Multiple sources claimed that the 1962 CSU swim team was the best in the program's history. The University of Utah's student publication commented, "CSU has undoubtedly one of the finest teams in their history." The Ram yearbook stated that, "CSU swimmers, having more depth than ever before, were rated the best in the school's history by Coach Art Solow." By raw times, sure the 1962 team was one of the best, but era adjusted, the mid 1930s CSU teams still hold water in the program's history.

Combined with a strong Utah team, it was a complete massacre for the Buffs, who failed to place first in a single event. Scored as a double dual meet, Colorado fell to both teams. Not a single CU swimmer managed to best a CSU counterpart. The exception was diver Bob Zika, who placed second behind Utah diver Jim Bell.

Utah, despite losing to CSU, managed to set all four new pool records. The 400 medley relay, 50 freestyle, 200 butterfly and 200 breaststroke were all reassigned under a Ute mantle. Coach Murphy observed that "his squad was swimming up to their abilities and is showing constant improvement." When you're down to your third string backup in several events, there isn't much you can do to stave off a program in one of their best seasons of all time. The student newspaper noted that Murphy had a "noticeable frown on his face after Friday's humbling..."

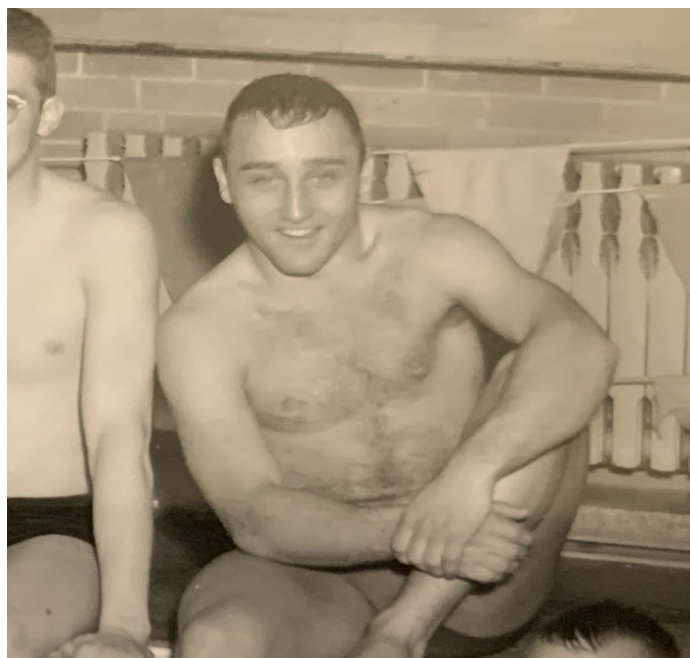


Fred Murphy Giving Advice to Ben Anderson

Speaking of teams that had their glory years in the mid 1930s, the next day CU traveled to Golden for a matchup against Mines. Joining the Orediggers and the Buffs were the New Mexico Lobos. Unlike CSU, both Mines and New Mexico had seen virtually no success postwar. However in 1962, the Lobos were finally beginning to turn things around. They ended up posting a 7-2 record in '62 and were headed by the legendary

Lobo, David David. Not a typo, he held the rare distinction of the identical first and last name. Perhaps he earned two Davids for his two way skills in both swimming and diving.

Franz and McElroy were the meet's MVPs. The two easily swept the 440 and 220 freestyles. McElroy's second-place finish in the 440 was 35 seconds ahead of third-place swimmer Coale from Mines, while Franz's time of 2:16.7 in the 220 shattered the previous pool record set just a week before. Coach Murphy coined Friday's performance "very frustrating," but remarked that Saturday's meet in Golden was "much better."



Jerry Urbach (1962)

Placing sixth place in the 200 medley is an individual not yet mentioned, CU swimmer Jerry Urbach. This was Urbach's first collegiate meet, and he would swim out the remaining three dual meets before retiring from CU swimming altogether. Urbach was in the Navy for several years before coming to CU. Urbach would go on to become a teacher and coach at Arvada High School, becoming the head of the girls swimming program there. Urbach passed away on February 9, 2009.

Up in Greeley, Colorado had another meet slated

against the Bears. This meet marked the long awaited return of Tony Wilson to the ranks. Wilson was still in a state of recovery, so Coach Murphy placed him in the 50 freestyle. His time of :24.8 was the winning time for the event, and the quickest 50 freestyle time by a Colorado swimmer since February 14, 1961.

Matt, this is where your 10 pages of texas tech lore goes. Also keeping the UNC section lighter because we've already dualled them

Oklahoma was already on the doorstep of the women's pool the next day, asking for one last dual meet before conference. The defending conference champions were looking for a complete sweep of CU, and Coach Mann ensured they received one. Aside from winning every single event, the Sooners placed second in five of the nine individual events. Second place finishers for the Buffs were Fitkin in the backstroke, Franz in the freestyles and Shaw in the breaststroke. Shaw's time was his fastest swim in nearly two months, his time of 2:34.7 just shy of Riggs of Oklahoma.