Cross Country

Cross country is a sport that requires great dedication. As former Bronco cross country, steeplechase and mile runner Bob Walker explained: "Most people really don't understand distance runners when they see them out practicing in all kinds of weather. They think they're crazy. Other people don't understand that runners are enjoying the running."

Walker, like today's distance runners, ran 80 to 90 miles a week in the summertime and as many as 160 miles a week during the school year to prepare for meets. The runners not only contend with the weather, but run a rugged course of steep terrain that might be sandy, hard or rocky, depending on where the meet takes place. A normal race is 10,000 meters for the men's course and 5,000 meters for the women. Some invitational races feature 3- and 5-mile races. Eagle Hills golf course provided the original Bronco cross country course. The current course runs along the edge of Ann Morrison Park with two small hills on an otherwise flat course.

In 1967, the long-awaited sport of cross country racing arrived under the direction of Dr. Gene Cooper, chairman of the Physical Education Department. Twelve runners turned out for the first team: John Urresti, Al McPherson, Doug Wood, Bob Bruns, Ronald Lee Kwai, Jim Hatcher, John Kaufman, Jim Gutowski, Gary Towe, Al Cariaga, Larry Law and George Wadsworth. A cross country course was laid out on the west side of Ann Morrison Park. For the next several years, the team competed against area colleges, including Northwest Nazarene, College of Idaho, Treasure Valley Community College, Weber State College and Idaho State.

In 1970, the Broncos, led by Hatcher, Herb Glassen and Jim Murkey, went undefeated in regular season competition, but did not participate in championship action. Boise State joined the Big Sky in cross country competition in 1971. That year, the Bronco harriers edged out Idaho by three points to capture third place in the Big Sky. Glassen, Bob Walker, Juan Lopez, Harry Otley, Ron Strand and Albert Ulaszzonek comprised the team.

The Broncos opened the 1972 season in a meet at Cottage Grove, Oregon, with a stunning win led by Walker and Strand, but later finished sixth in the Big Sky. In 1973, the Broncos broke into the winner's circle by running for their first Big Sky title. Walker won the meet, the first Bronco to win a conference championship in cross country. Dave Lockman, Jim Bonnell, Howard Hockenberry, Randy Teraberry and Walker were on the winning team that competed in the NCAA championships in Spokane, Washington. BSU finished in 17th place as Walker came in 58th out of 222 runners and Randy Teraberry came in 121st.

In the 1975 season Steve Collier set a Bronco course record of 24:42 and the Broncos finished second in the Big Sky. The cross country team roared back in 1976, and Jim Van Dine set a new course record of 24:38. After winning a series of invitational races, the Broncos placed five runners in the top 10 to win first place at the Big Sky championship. Van Dine, Collier, Emil Magallanes, Glen Lorenzen, Karl Knapp, Gil Esparza and...
Mark Tappen comprised the championship team. The entire squad competed in the NCAA cross-country finals in Denton, Texas. Of 34 complete teams, the Broncos finished in 19th place.

The cross country team placed second in the Idaho State University Invitational and fourth in the Big Sky in 1978. Members of that team included Stan Link, Knapp, Tom Rothenberger, Mike Henry, Jim Linderborn, Tom Mulhern and Barry Boettcher.

Recent cross country highlights include Dan Holmes placing fifth in the Big Sky and ninth in the District VII competition in 1986, and Dan Crane taking sixth in the Big Sky cross country meet in 1988 and fourth in 1990. Robin Card also placed third at the 1990 conference meet. The team's highest Big Sky finish in several years came in 1992 when it placed fourth. Richard Lee was seventh in that meet.

The Broncos placed fifth in the Big Sky in 1993, but senior Tim Roorda captured the individual conference championship, the first BSU runner to win since Bob Walker in 1973. Roorda finished as the Broncos' top runner in each of the team's six meets.

Bronco women formed a cross country team in 1976 and track and field stars participated in the new sport. Basil Dahlstrom coached the women runners. It was not until October 1977 that the Broncos could field a full cross country team in competition. Prior to that time, only individuals participated because the Bronco team was short of runners.
and suffered a number of injuries. Members of the squad in 1977 included Julie Crisp, Arlene Bartolme, Barbara Buchan, Cindy Jorgenson, Jacque Crist and Sandy Kassens. At its second to last meet in 1977, the women's team defeated highly regarded Eastern Washington for a big win. The team competed in the regional cross country meet, but came in 15th out of 16 teams.

The experience of 1977 paid off for the women runners. In 1978, they won the Montana State invitational by defeating Montana, Montana State, BYU, Whitworth and the University of Wyoming. In that meet, Jody Smith came in second, Judy Smith took third, Beth Ruprecht placed 12th, Cherry Gardner finished 13th and Jorgenson 17th. Leslie Bastian and Lorraine Carlson also ran for the Broncos. Also highlighting 1978 was a defeat of Idaho State Bengals in a dual meet. The Broncos finished eighth at the Northwest Collegiate Women's Sports Association Region IX finals and Jody Smith qualified for the AIAW national cross country championship at Englewood, Colorado, placing 142nd out of 250 runners. She was the first Bronco woman to qualify for national cross country competition.

In 1979, Smith finished third at regionals and her sister, Judy, finished 10th. Both women qualified for national competition. Jody finished 28th nationally and Judy finished in 73rd place in Tallahassee, Florida.

In 1980, the Broncos finished in third place in regional competition and sent six runners to the AIAW nationals in Seattle, where the team finished in 15th place. Members of the Bronco team were Gardner, Jody Smith, Cindy Crow, Kathy Kenworthy, Connie Pattis and Sandy Lorah. The women entered the Mountain West Athletic Conference in 1982 and the conference merged with the Big Sky in 1988.

During the 1980s and '90s the Broncos struggled in women's cross country, with the highest conference finishes being third in 1989 and 1990. In regional competition, the Broncos tied for fourth with Colorado out of 19 teams in 1989 and placed sixth in 1990.

Those teams were led by Kathy Karpel, who was the first Bronco runner to compete in the national cross country meet at the NCAA Division I level. As a sophomore in 1989, she placed 85th out of 183 finishers. The next year she was second in the Big Sky meet and...
improved to 65th out of 180 finishers at the NCAA meet. She also holds several school records in track and was named to the conference all-academic team almost every semester during her four-year career.

**Volleyball**

Shirley Adams introduced volleyball into the women's physical education program in 1959. The game became very popular and remained a regular offering in physical education. The sport was introduced at the intercollegiate level in 1970 by Coach Connie Thorngren. Most of the volleyball players were also Thorngren's basketball and field hockey stars — Penny Gillaspy, Barbara Eisenbarth, Toni Turnbull, Carmen Latina, Gail Lewis, Linda Teeter, Jody Prescott, team captain Ronnie Rich, Della Kunz, Debbie Thompson and Diane Westbrook. The volleyball team participated in the Idaho Women's College Sports Association play and in Division II competition.

In 1973, the women competed in both brackets A and B at the Northwest Collegiate Women's Sports Association volleyball tournament. The Broncos came in fourth in the Division A bracket and took second in the Division B bracket. Thorngren coached volleyball for four years before turning the position over to Genger Fahleson in 1974. In 1975, with an inexperienced team, the Broncos fell to 10th in the NCWSA. In 1977, the Broncos participated in the NCWSA qualifying playoff at Ellensburg, Washington. Disappointingly, the women did not place. Kendra Falen coached the Broncos in 1978, but they did not advance to any tournament play.

Darlene Bailey became head volleyball coach in 1979. She also assisted with women's basketball and served as sports information director for the women's programs. Then in 1983, the volleyball team became her only assignment.

In 1981, the women spikers won the Interstate League Championship and the AIAW Division II Region IX championship. The Broncos had a perfect 8-0 record in the Interstate League, and a record of 30 wins and 5 losses. In amassing the perfect conference mark, their most impressive performance was against a tough University of Idaho team. The Broncos defeated the Vandals in five games, marking their first victory over the U of I in volleyball.

Winning the Region IX championship gave the Broncos an automatic berth into the AIAW national championships held in Colorado Springs, Colorado. It was the first time a Bronco volleyball team competed at the national level. The Broncos began the tournament with a victory over Region VI champion Central Missouri State, winning 15-13, 15-7. They then fell to Florida International and Northern Colorado, finishing the tournament in ninth place.

Six Bronco players garnered awards. Pam Hadley, Beth Bergin, and Ronda Recknor-Carson made the all-region and all-league teams. Annette Waters also was named to the all-region team.
Rhonda Cochran received second team All-Interstate League honors.

In 1982, the volleyball program jumped to Division I when it joined the Mountain West Athletic Conference. In its first year at the new level, the team was 9-7 in the conference and qualified for the MWAC tournament. The Broncos finished third at the championship and were 24-8 overall. Setter-hitter Katrina Stein made the All-Mountain West first team, a feat that she accomplished for three consecutive years, 1982-84. Seniors Kristi Brockway and Waters were selected Mountain West scholar-athletes in 1982.

For the next several years, the Broncos built the previously successful Division II program into a consistent Division I winner. During the early years in Division I volleyball, honors went to many individual players. Carson added to her 1981 awards by being named to the All-MWAC first team in 1983. Linda Clemens, who set a school record for most career digs, played for the Broncos from 1982-85. In 1986, she became the first student-athlete inducted into the BSU Student Hall of Fame. Sharon Leonhardt took All-MWAC first team awards in 1985 and 1986, and remains a school record holder for most kills in a single season. Stein and Clemens still hold Bronco records.

In 1986, Leonhardt, along with setter Sara Herzberg, middleblocker Suzette Gervais and outside hitter Rebecca Richards, paced the Bronco spikers to a 23-10 record and a second-place finish in the Mountain West Athletic Conference. Boise State volleyball moved into the Big Sky in 1987 when the MWAC dissolved. The 1987 team broke 12 school records and produced a 21-14 season, but missed out on tournament play. The team was very young with senior Sara Herzberg the only All-Big Sky selection.

With the experience from 1987, the Broncos turned up the power and won the 1988 Big Sky regular season championship with a 15-1 record. The overall 21-7 record marked the third straight 20-plus season for the women spikers. Sparked by Kelly Baker, who became the most highly-recognized Bronco volleyball player in the program's history, the 1988 Broncos gave Coach Bailey her 200th win, which came at home against the Northern Arizona Lumberjacks. The match, intense from the outset, saw the Broncos go ahead 15-7, 15-5, and then lose twice at 14-16. The women bounced back with a 15-4 fifth game to win the match. With this victory, the 1988 team tied the 1981 team for most consecutive wins in a season with 17.

Members of the 1988 Big Sky championship team were starters Baker, Kari Greenwald, Sandy Stewart, Rebecca Richards, Debbie Hansmann, Chris Bond, Allissa Victor and Sondra Swan. Kim Dodd, Lisa Hamson and Kristy Jensen also contributed to the successful season. Baker, Stewart, Richards and Hansmann were selected to the All-Big Sky team. Greenwald and Bond were Big Sky All-Academic picks.

The 1989 Broncos finished the season second in the Big Sky with a 13-3 league record and an overall mark of 24-7. The Broncos ranked 10th in the NCAA Northwest region. This talented team earned an invitation to the Women's Invi-
tional Volleyball Championship, volleyball's version of basketball's NIT. The championships were held at the University of Alabama at Birmingham on December 1-2, and marked the first national tournament appearance by the volleyball team since the Broncos moved into Division I in 1982.

The Broncos defeated Arkansas State, top-seeded University of Georgia and Murray State to advance to the semifinals. In that round, the Broncos defeated William and Mary and played the championship match against the University of Wisconsin. A loss to Wisconsin moved the Broncos to second place in the tournament. The team succeeded in putting Boise State and the state of Idaho on the national volleyball map.

Runners-Up in the WIVC, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Baker</td>
<td>MB</td>
<td>Debbie Hansmann</td>
<td>OH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrie Best</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Tina Harris</td>
<td>OH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Bond</td>
<td>S/H</td>
<td>Christine Johnson</td>
<td>OH/MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Dodd</td>
<td>MB</td>
<td>Sandy Stewart</td>
<td>MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kari Greenwald</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Allisa Victor</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Hamson</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Yvette Ybarra</td>
<td>OH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coach: Darlene Bailey
Team captain and middle blocker Baker was named to the All-WIVC first team. She also garnered All-Northwest Region first team honors in 1987 and 1989, and All-Big Sky first team selections in 1987 and 1989. Baker, who also was a star on the track team, remains the school record holder for the most blocks and the most kills in a career. Stewart, co­captain of the 1989 team, earned All-Big Sky first­team honors in 1988 and 1989 and holds several blocking records. Co­captain and outside hitter Hansmann was selected by the All-WIVC and the All-Big Sky teams in 1988 and 1989. Bond, Hamson and Christine Johnson made the Big Sky All-Academic team.

The 1990 volleyball team ran up a 23-12 overall and 11-5 Big Sky record. They won the St. Mary's College Volleyball Classic, placed third in the Big Sky, and again received an invitation to the Women's Invitational Volleyball Championships in Knoxville, Tennessee. The 14th­seeded Broncos lost to Georgia in their opener, but defeated Northern Iowa, Akron and Arkansas State. They found themselves in a three­way tie for first place in their pool with Georgia and Arkansas State. In the tiebreakers, BSU downed Arkansas State 22-20, but lost to Georgia 15-13. For the second year in a row, the Broncos surprised the 20­team field, this time finishing fifth.

Johnson paced the Broncos and made the All-Northwest Region first team in 1990, as well as the All-Big Sky second team. She also became a Big Sky All-Academic scholar in both 1989 and 1990. Freshman middle blocker Kristen Dutto was named All-Big Sky Co-Freshman of the Year in 1990, while Bond, Dodd, Greenwald and Christine Johnson were Big Sky All-Academic student­athletes.

In 1991, the Broncos surprised the conference after being picked to finish no better than sixth, but almost ended with the championship. At the Big Sky tournament the BSU team upset second­ranked Northern Arizona before losing the conference championship match to Montana in four games. The Broncos finished the season with a 9-7 conference record and an overall 16-13 mark. Middle blocker Dutto and outside hitter Angie Olsen were named to the All-Conference and All-Northwest Region second team.

Although picked to finish fifth in the conference, the 1992 volleyball team finished third both in the Big Sky regular season and in the conference tournament. The team recorded a 9-5 record in the conference and 14-12 overall, the eighth consecutive winning season for the Broncos. One Bronco won All-Big Sky honors: outside hitter Tina Harris.

The Bronco team of 1993 was a mix of veteran and young players. Three freshman — Crystal Carr, Amber Woodcock and Cyndi Neece — played key roles along with seniors Dutto and Teri Johnson. The Broncos ended the season in fourth place in the Big Sky with an 8-6 conference mark. The team lost its opening match in the Big Sky tournament to eventual champion Idaho and finished the season at 12-13 overall.

Neece was named the conference Freshman of the Year and Dutto, a four-year starter for the Broncos, was named to the All-Northwest region second team, as well as the all-conference and all-tournament teams.
Gymnastics

Women's gymnastics began at Boise State in 1970 under the direction of Coach Pat Holman, who also was a physical education instructor and softball coach. In 1971, the women sponsored four gymnastic clinics at Boise State. The team got off to a good start by finishing third in the Wasatch meet at BYU in Provo, Utah, with a score of 67.9. Members of the team were Shannon Page, Jeanie Reilly, Jill Zander, Shannon McDonald, Patty Link, Helen Fleenor and Diane Darling. The whole team returned in 1972 and added freshmen Cindy Mudd, Karen Price, Pam Waddell and Gayle Jurkovich.

In the fall of 1972 a gymnast named Jackie Turnipseed joined the squad. She would later return to the Broncos as head coach Jackie Carringer.


In 1975, the Bronco gymnasts won the ICW state championship for the fourth time with a team score of 66.36. Lori Jukich took first in the overall with 19.7 points. The 1975 team placed 11th out of 16 teams at regionals and the Broncos moved to eighth in 1977.

Ed Zimmer took over the gymnastics program in 1978. His two-year tenure as Bronco coach saw many firsts, including BSU's first national qualifiers, first televised meet, first regional trophy and the highest placing ever of a Bronco team. An 8-7 dual meet record in 1978 qualified the Broncos for the Northwest Collegiate Women's Sports Association tournament, where they ended seventh overall with a new high team score of 117.35. Judy Ferguson finished seventh on the balance beam and 10th on the vault and the uneven parallel bars. Along
with Ferguson, Nancy Wilkens and Pam Coker participated in the AIAW Small College tournament at the Air Force Academy.

Zimmer's 1979 squad had a 17-5 season and a record score of 126+. They won the NCWSA Division II regional tournament and for the first time qualified as a team for the AIAW Division II nationals in Topeka, Kansas, where they finished 11th. The team was led by Patty Rintala, who placed 6th on floor and 10th on vault at regionals and Leslie Bastian, who placed 8th on vault at regionals. Other strong contributors to the regional championship team were Pam Coker, Michelle Kingsbury, Sheila Milligan, Linda Rife, Jo Cassin, Cecily Corder and Jerrie Sievers.

The 1980 season built on the success of the previous two. Coach John Head and assistant Jackie Carringer brought the best out of an outstanding group of student-athletes. In March, the Bronco gymnasts ranked third in the nation among Division II schools. In meet after meet, the team set new records. Top performers for the 1980 women included Corder, Coker, Shalagh Astor, Lori Talbot, Kelly Parker, and twins Mary and Martha Howard. The talented team repeated as NCWSA Division II regional champions in 1980 and again qualified for the national meet held in Shreveport, Louisiana. For the first time in Bronco history, two gymnasts, Astor and Talbot, made it to finals in the individual championships. Astor finished in seventh place on the balance beam, and became the first Bronco gymnast to earn All-American status. Talbot followed with an 11th place finish on the uneven parallel bars. The team ended in fourth place in the nation for Division II schools.

Carringer took over as head coach for the 1981 season. In the NCWSA Division II regionals, Mary Howard notched the Broncos' first 9-point scores — a 9.05 in both the balance beam and the uneven parallel bars, while Parker scored an 8.9 in the floor exercise. Those performances sparked the Broncos to their third straight Northwest championship and a trip to the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, to compete in the AIAW Division II national gymnastics championships. The squad placed ninth, but Carringer and the team came back disappointed when none of the women finished in the top 12.

The Broncos repeated their success in 1982, winning the NCWSA regional finals before a home crowd in Bronco Gym. BSU's Martha Howard, Parker, Janelle Maynard and Kim DiLorenzo led to a record team score of 137.95. Howard scored a school record on the balance beam with a 9.1 and took fourth place with an 8.7 in the floor exercise. She finished second overall with a cumulative score of 34.35. At nationals, the Broncos finished eighth and Maynard was named a Division II All-American gymnast.

In 1983 all BSU women's sports moved to Division I and participated in the Mountain West Athletic Conference. For the gymnasts, this meant regional competition against higher level programs, such as those in the Pac-10 and Western Athletic Conference. Some of the new rivals, like Utah, were perennial national powers. The Bronco gymnasts, led by DiLorenzo, captured their MWAC cham-

---

pionship on their first attempt. The women established a school record with a team score of 171.45 points in beating Montana, Montana State and Eastern Washington. DiLorenzo captured the all-around championship with a score of 35.0. Maynard came in second with 34.35 as she set new schools record of 9.2 on the vault and 9.05 in the floor exercise. Freshmen Connie Lavertu, Kelly Parker-Head and Nicole Goodman also contributed to the victory.

The Broncos were seeded seventh in the regional meet in Logan, Utah. DiLorenzo was named All-Around Athlete in the MWAC and Lavertu proved to be the Broncos' most valuable gymnast in BSU's first year as a Division I program.

The 1984 Broncos were ranked 16th in the nation in January, and Lavertu ranked fifth among the nation's gymnasts after she scored a 36.50 all-around mark against the Brigham Young Cougars. Her score set both a BSU and MWAC record. The gymnastics team also embarked on its longest journey ever that season, traveling to Honolulu, Hawaii, in January to participate in a competition and spend nine days in training.

Upon returning home from Hawaii, Maynard hit a new school record 9.45 on the uneven parallel bars in a three-team meet with Montana and Seattle Pacific. The Broncos went on to win every event in a meet on February 11 with the University of Oregon. Freshman Karie Kunkler won all events except the uneven parallel bars, which Maynard captured to give the Broncos the clean sweep.

Despite the loss of Lavertu and DiLorenzo to knee surgery, the injury-riddled Broncos earned a berth in the Mountain West finals in Cheney, Washington. Using only six healthy gymnasts, the Broncos came within 55 hundredths of a point of winning a second championship. Montana won the event with a score of 172.55, followed by the Broncos at 172.00. Maynard captured the all-around title and set two school and MWAC records with a 9.3 in the vault and a 9.35 in floor exercise.

The 1985 team placed third in the MWAC, but the 1986 gymnasts again won the Mountain West Athletic Conference championship and brought Coach Carringer the MWAC Coach of the Year award. The Broncos were 17-8 on the season and undefeated in the conference. The women scored new highs in individual and team points. Against the University of Oregon and Eastern Washington, the Broncos scored an all-time team high of 176.2 overall points to win the meet. The next week against Seattle Pacific, Montana State and Spokane Community College, the Broncos scored 176.3 overall. Another team high was reached against the University of Montana at 177.55. During the season, depth paid off as a number of gymnasts took turns being high-point person for the team. Standouts for the squad were Tina Smith, DiLorenzo, Cassi Harlow, Kelly King, Kunkler, Kelly Zerfas, Tracy Trumbo, Lavertu and Anne McClay. Lavertu and Harlow qualified individually to the NCAA regionals.

The gymnasts repeated in the 1987 season, producing a 24-7
overall record and winning their second consecutive Mountain West championship in Bronco Gym. BSU eclipsed the 180 mark for the first time ever, scoring 180.05 to outdistance its nearest rival, Montana State with 175.65. Four women gained All-Mountain West first-team honors: Lavertu, Harlow, Tracy Trumbo and Lisa Treciak. The victory also gave Carringer her 100th win. The team’s scores earned it the right to participate for the first time as a team in the NCAA Division I West regional championships. The region included Washington, Stanford, Oregon State, UC-Berkeley, UCLA, San Jose State, Cal State-Fullerton and UC-Santa Barbara. In their first big-time competition the team finished seventh.

The spring following the 1987 season, Carringer left Boise State to accept an offer to work with developing Olympic hopefuls in Australia. At the time of her departure from the gymnastics program, the Broncos held nine of 11 MWAC records. 1987 marked the end of the Mountain West Athletic Conference’s sponsorship of gymnastics and there was concern that Boise State might drop the program. However, the athletic department decided not only to keep the sport, but to upgrade it. A national search for a coach ensued, and Yvonne “Sam” Sandmire, a successful club coach in Montana, became the new Bronco coach in the fall of 1987.

Sandmire’s goal was excellence in all phases of the program. Using this motto, she inspired her gymnasts:

“Excellence can be attained if you...
— Care more than others think is wise.
— Risk more than others think is safe.
— Dream more than others think is practical.
— Expect more than others think is possible.”

In Sandmire’s first year, with the help of assistant coach Bill Steinbach, the Broncos produced a season record of 17-5. By January 1988, the gymnasts were 11-0 and they won the Washington Open, where junior Treciak won the all-around with 36.45 points. The women cruised through a tough schedule that included the University of Alaska, UC-Santa Barbara, San Jose State and Seattle Pacific. Led by Zerfas, Trumbo, Kunkler and Cherianne Calkins, the Broncos stretched their record to 14-1 by mid-February. The Broncos earned their second trip to Division I West regionals at Oregon State University, but fell below their seasonal averages and finished in seventh place.

In the spring of 1988, the Bronco gymnastics program became a member of the High Country Athletic Conference that included the perennial national champion University of Utah, Utah State, the University of Denver, Brigham Young University and the University of New Mexico.

The 1989 season was already on a roll in February when freshman Liz Seeley set a school record with a 9.60 in floor exercise at San Jose State, while taking all-around honors with 37.55 points. When San Jose State came to Boise the next month, the Broncos scored an all-time high of 189.10. By March, the Broncos were 12-6 and had won a four-way
meet with Ball State, Alaska and Seattle Pacific. Calkins scored a record 38.00 all-around score, with 9.60 on the vault and a 9.65 on the bars. Trumbo tied the vault mark.

Seeded fourth in the High Country Conference championships, that is where the Broncos finished, with a score of 186.15. Seeley made the All-Conference first team. The Broncos made their third straight appearance at the NCAA West regional, where they were seeded sixth. To the delight of the Broncos and the surprise of several schools, the women placed fifth. Seniors Harlow, Smith, Trumbo, Treciak, and Zerfas all ended their competitive careers at the regional contest. A final national ranking of 20th would set the standard for future Bronco squads.

The Broncos' success did not go unnoticed. In the summer of 1989, Sandmire was offered the head coaching position at Stanford University. Prompted by a desire to live in Boise and promises of growth opportunities from the administration, she chose to continue coaching the Broncos. A season-opening victory over Stanford in January of 1990 confirmed her conviction that she could reach her goals at BSU.

The Stanford meet also marked a turning point in the program. For the first time in the history of BSU gymnastics, Bronco Gym was packed to capacity and fans had to be turned away. At the first opportunity, a meet was scheduled for the Pavillion. On February 2 before 3,701 fans, the Broncos upset 16th-ranked Washington in the first gymnastics meet ever held in the Pavillion.

The 1990 squad saw the beginning of the "Chicago Connection" with a pair of freshmen stars — Chirssy Koennecker became the 1990 MVP, and Debbie Justus became a record-holder on the beam and a strong all-rounder. Koennecker became the first Bronco to perform the major release move on the bars, do the triple twist on the floor and do the first and only handspring double twist on the vault. The Broncos finished in sixth place in the High Country Athletic Conference and took seventh place in the Western region.

"Eight is Enough" began the motto of the small 1991 gymnastic squad. When illness and injury reduced the roster from eight to six, Sandmire had to lower her expectations. Still, miracles happened! With every gymnast competing all-around every meet, the Broncos broke four individual and three team records, and reached a milestone team score of 190 in the season finale. The High Country Conference merged with the Western Athletic Conference in 1991. The Broncos, led by Anne Staker, Seeley, Koennecker, Justus, Noelle Dragoo and Tracey Kalin, finished fourth in the WAC and seventh in the regional competition. Tina Smith joined the coaching staff in 1991.

Two more Chicagoans, Karrie Swanson and Jennifer Martin, joined the team in 1992, while Julie Wagner arrived from Brighton, Colorado, and rewrote the Bronco record book. Leslie Mott, an elite gymnast from San Antonio, Texas, joined the Broncos for the 1992 season. This recruiting class would have a major impact on the program.

Wagner led the talented '92 squad to new heights as she scored 9.8 in all four events and 39.1 in the all-around. The team
also reached new highs with a 191.8 and 191.9 during the season. The team finished fourth at the WAC championships, and fifth at the NCAA Western regionals. The Broncos' final 1992 ranking was 20th in the nation and entering the 1993 season, Wagner owned or shared every Bronco record. Wagner became the first Bronco to advance to the NCAA national gymnastics championships.

The 1993 season was the best in Bronco history, adding several new team and individual records in the books. Seeley returned to the squad following open-heart surgery, and helped the team in every meet with her performance in the vault and floor exercise. Wagner increased the difficulty of her routines to become one of the nation's top collegiate gymnasts. Martin, a high school teammate of Koennecker and Swanson, performed well on the vault, while freshman Amy Temico, out of the Desert Devil Academy in Phoenix, challenged Wagner through the season.

The 1993 team scored 190 or better in six regular season meets as it competed against teams from Brigham Young, Utah, Ohio State and Arizona State. The team hit its peak at the Western Athletic Conference meet, held in the BSU Pavilion. The Broncos finished third behind national champion Utah and Brigham Young, but scored a school-record 192.1. Wagner hit a 10 on the vault, the first perfect score in school history. That vault also brought the event total to 49.05, the first time the team scored more than 49 points in a single event.

A qualifying average of over 190 sent BSU to the NCAA regional meet for the seventh straight year. When the chalk dust settled, the Broncos had finished fourth, narrowly missing a team trip to nationals, but earning an NIT bid. Wagner ranked second in the country among individuals, qualifying for nationals for the second year in a row. Between regionals and nationals, she was crowned NIT all-around champion, leading the team to a fourth-place finish. At nationals Wagner proved again that she could compete with the best by finishing eighth overall and earning All-American status. The '93 squad finished its year with the highest national ranking of any BSU team — 17th in the country.

The BSU gymnasts were not only successful in the competitive arena, but in the classroom as well. Sandmire's squad boasted a 100 percent graduation rate and several All-American Scholar Athletes. Anne Staker Tibbetts was named Idaho's NCAA Woman of the Year, earned an NCAA post-graduate scholarship, was a Top-Ten Scholar and won the President's Silver Medallion Award in 1993.

The 1994 season was a roller coaster ride for Coach Sandmire and her team. Injuries plagued the gymnasts early in the year, but the team slowly progressed and was in peak form by the end of the season. For the eighth consecutive year, the Broncos qualified for the NCAA Western regional meet, which in 1994 was hosted for the first time by Boise State. More than 3,000 fans were on hand as the Broncos scored a 189.45 to take sixth behind such powerhouse teams as Oregon State, UCLA and Utah.

The Broncos did not advance to the NCAA finals, but were accepted into the National Invitational Tournament the following week, where they scored a 191.475 to finish a close second behind the University of Oklahoma. The Broncos ended their season ranked 22nd in the nation.

Two gymnasts earned special recognition — Julie Wagner successfully defended the NIT all-around title that she won the year before by scoring a 39.025 and Amy Landau was named an Academic All-American Scholar Athlete by the U.S. College Gymnastics Coaches Association.