Bobby Dye, who had made his mark on the national scene in 1978 by coming within one game of the NCAA Final Four with Cal State-Fullerton, was hired as BSU basketball coach in 1983. Dye brought his defensive style of play to the Bronco basketball program from Cal State-Bakersfield, where he had taken the Roadrunners to the Final Four in NCAA Division II in 1982 and 1983. He brought a coaching staff with him that stayed together at BSU another nine years. It included Rich Rider, George Barrios and Rod Jensen.

BSU's 7-year string of losing seasons ended in Dye's first campaign when the Broncos went 15-13, with Bruce Bolden, Vince Hinchen and Rawn Hayes piling up impressive statistics. In Dye's first year, other Bronco players included Jon Oliver, Eric Bailey, Frank Jackson, Mike Hazel, James McNorton, Ron Grossart and Ron Schimbke. Jeff Kelley began his college career with Dye's first Boise State team, which finished second in defense in the Big Sky Conference and first in defensive rebounding average, allowing opponents only 30.5 rebounds a game.

Bronco fans did not have to wait long for memorable moments, as BSU downed Wyoming and Fresno State in back-to-back games at the BSU Pavilion in December. The stunning win over FSU was the Broncos' first-ever over a Top Twenty opponent.

The squad ended up 6-8 in the Big Sky and lost a last-second heartbreaker in the first round of the conference tournament, with Montana State squeaking out a 65-64 decision in Bozeman. Hinchen was named first team All-Big Sky, the first Bronco in six years to be so honored.

The 1984-85 season produced a 16-13 mark. Jackson, Bolden and center Kelley again were mainstays of the team. Roland Smith and Craig Spjute joined the Broncos from a talented Ricks College team. The regular season saw the Broncos give Wyoming another headache in a 57-55 upset at Laramie. A sweep of the Idaho Vandals keyed the Big Sky
schedule, and a 67-54 stunner over Montana shook up the first round of the Big Sky tournament before over 9,000 noisy fans in the BSU Pavilion. But Nevada-Reno ended the Broncos’ Cinderella bid in the quarterfinals.

When Bolden, Hazel and Jackson ended their careers, the Broncos were left in a rebuilding situation. The 1985-86 season served that purpose, with the Broncos going 12-16 and hoping for better. The campaign was not without its exciting moments. The Broncos threw a scare into Oregon State at Gill Coliseum in Corvallis when BSU’s potential game-winning layup rimmed out with one second left in overtime, and the Beavers escaped. The high point of the conference was a 61-55 decision over Idaho in the Kibbie Dome. Guard Chris Childs was named Freshman of the Year in the Big Sky.

The Broncos introduced the Real Dairy Classic and the Albertson Holiday Classic tournaments to Boise early in the 1985-86 season.

The Broncos returned only four lettermen going into 1986-87, and most experts in the Big Sky initially did not give Boise State a second look. But, soon the team was the talk of the town—and the conference. Arnell Jones, Childs, Kelley, Jeff Foster, Eric Hayes and Doug Usitalo were backed up by Mike Sanor, Dan Olson, Brian Sperry, Gregg Dodd and freshmen David Lowery and Jon Johnson. Fans must have sensed the unspoken optimism in the always-cautious Dye, because attendance skyrocketed from the outset. The throngs savored titles in the Real Dairy and Albertson’s Holiday Classics, part of a 12-2 start. Crowds of 10,000-plus for key Big Sky games became commonplace, and a 71-59 victory over defending conference champion Montana State gave the Broncos their first 20-win season as a member of the NCAA.
The 1986-87 Broncos went 10-4 in the Big Sky and 22-8 overall. They were surprised in the first round of the Big Sky tournament in a 78-77 loss to ISU, but still received a National Invitation Tournament bid. It was BSU's first postseason appearance in 11 years and they made the most of it. In the NIT, the Broncos upended the University of Utah Utes 62-61 before perhaps the loudest crowd in BSU Pavilion history. They then traveled to Seattle and outplayed the Washington Huskies and star center Christian Welp, but a huge foul disadvantage hampered BSU down the stretch in a 73-68 loss.

Dye's fourth season marked the beginning of a remarkable three-year run of 20-win seasons. Expectations were understandably at an all-time high entering the 1987-88 season. And the Broncos did not disappoint, roaring off to a 16-1 start. Ironically, the only loss in the stretch provided one of the most memorable nights ever in the Pavilion. BSU and Wyoming had arranged a home-and-home series for that season, and the Cowboys paid a visit on December 22, 1987.

Wyoming, led by center Eric Leckner and its showman/superstar, Fennis Dembo, was ranked fifth at the time. A record-smashing crowd of 12,265 jammed the arena and rocked it for two hours. The game went to the wire, and Wyoming survived 59-55 on two clinching free throws after a slip in the lane by a driving Childs and a subsequent BSU foul.

The conference season opened with the worst possible scenario—the dreaded Montana road trip. But the Broncos swept the Montana schools up north for only the second time ever, and they went on to a 7-0 start in the Big Sky. Included in that stretch was a defensive classic against Idaho, the Broncos stifling the Vandals 47-44 in front of more than 12,000 fans.

BSU won the regular season title with a 13-3 record and opened Big Sky tournament play in Bozeman by rolling over Idaho State 87-56. That catapulted the Broncos into the title game against host Montana State. After several lead-changes and comebacks, the Broncos pulled out a last-second 63-61 win when Childs drove the baseline for a layup. With the win came the conference title and an automatic berth in the NCAA Tournament, the Broncos' first since 1976.

BSU wins!

By Ricky Hill

With the clock showing one second to play, the 1987 NIT game with the Utes of Utah was won by a little luck and 10,003 screaming fans. The Broncos had missed three free throws and a dunk in the last 42 seconds. Utah had the ball in the final seven seconds of the game, and Albert Springs dribbled down the floor for what seemed destined to be a winning slam at the buzzer.

But BSU forward Arnell Jones sped in front and knocked the ball out of Springs' hand, fouling him in the process. Coach Bobby Dye called timeout and then substituted twice to give Springs time to think about his free throws. The strategy paid off as Springs missed both free throws and the Broncos came away with a 62-61 win.

In second-round action, Boise State faced the University of Washington. Ahead 30-27 at halftime, the Broncos eagerly came out on the floor for the second half only to find themselves in deep foul trouble. Boise State played a close game, trailing only 71-68 with less than a minute to play. The Broncos lost 73-68 after a break-away dunk by Washington to end the game.
The Broncos drew the University of Michigan out of the Big Ten, featuring Glen Rice, Gary Grant and Terry Mills, in the first round of the NCAA tournament in Salt Lake City. The Broncos suffered first half jitters in the Michigan encounter and fell behind 36-20 at the half. Trailing by 18 with less than 12 minutes left, the Broncos actually started wearing down the Wolverines. Michigan wasn't getting up on the boards, and its shots (including free throws) were falling short.

The scrappy Broncos got hot from the field and were finally forcing turnovers. With six seconds remaining, they trailed 61-58. Bronco Brian King had the ball in the final seconds. He took two dribbles before letting the ball fly from 24 feet. For a moment, the three-point attempt seemed true, but the ball hit off the right of the rim, quieting the crowd and stopping a remarkable comeback attempt. The season ended with 24 wins and 6 losses.

The 1988-89 Broncos continued their winning ways, posting a 23-7 season and again going 13-3 in Big Sky play. WE WILL, WE WILL ROCK YOU! reverberated throughout the packed Pavilion, and unofficial cheerleader Jack Harvey nearly burst his lungs shouting BOISEEEE! while the crowd roared back, STAAAATE!

BSU notched another one for the memory bank December 10 when Oregon State came to the Pavilion in Ralph Miller's final tour of duty as the Beavers' coach. Miller, the winningest active coach in the country, brought in a talented crew featuring All-Pac 10 guard Gary Payton. But All-Big Sky guard Chris Childs dug in defensively, holding Payton to seven points while scoring 17 himself. The Broncos worked in concert with almost 10,000 roaring fans, smothering OSU 53-43.

The memory-maker of the Big Sky season came February 23, when Boise State made its first-ever national TV appearance in basketball. The Pavilion put on quite a show for the ESPN cameras, as the record crowd of 12,422 rose and fell with every momentum swing between the Broncos and the Idaho Vandals. But in the end, it was BSU taking a thrilling 63-61 decision.

That victory led to the Big Sky regular sea-
son title and the host spot in the conference tournament. The Broncos fell in the final to Idaho, but still went to postseason play, earning an NIT bid and a trip to Stillwater, Oklahoma, where they tangled with the Oklahoma State Cowboys. For the first 35 minutes of play, the slow-paced Broncos frustrated the Cowboys by taking 30 or more seconds off the shot clock with each possession. Early in the second half, BSU led 41-36, but free throws and rebounds put OSU back in control and gave the Cowboys the victory 69-55.

The feisty 1988-89 team consisted of Big Sky Player of the Year Childs and All-Big Sky forward Wilson Foster along with King, Sperry, Rich Blythe, David Lowery, Jon Johnson, Maury Samilton, Scott Kern, Jarvis Helaire, Michael Pearson and freshman Daniel Evans. Childs ended his brilliant stay at BSU with a total of 1,602 points, second only to Steve Connor at that time in career scoring. Childs started every game in his four-year career and was named to the All-Conference team three times.

“Taking Care of Business” became the motto of the 1989-90 Bronco men's basketball program, as BSU unveiled freshman Tanoka Beard. The team started 1-3 and the Broncos struggled to field a team as its ranks were depleted by injuries. A pair of football players — Ricky Hill and Frank Robinson — came to the rescue. Both had played basketball in high school, and took to the game like veterans. Beard and the football players, coupled with the never-say-die attitude of players like Blythe and King, kept fan interest alive, and the Broncos averaged 8,474 in attendance.

The ultimate tribute to this undermanned but gritty 12-15 team came in its final home game, when an otherwise unimportant game against Northern Arizona drew over 10,000 fans. It served as a resounding “thank you.”

The 1990-91 Broncos saw only four returning lettermen, sophomore center Beard, guard/forward Archie Wright, guard Lance Vaughn and center Jon Johnson. A host of junior college transfers including Billy Fikes, Dan Jones and Michael Trotter, began their careers at Boise State. Boise High product Jeff Sanor elected to finish his playing days with the Broncos after spending three seasons at the University of Washington.

Tanoka Beard

Tanoka Beard dominated the basketball court during his playing days from 1989-93. Now, he dominates the Bronco record book. The most prolific scorer in Boise State history, his 1,966 points moved him ahead of guard Steve Conner, and placed him third on the Big Sky’s all-time scoring list.

“T,” a native of Ogden, Utah, holds career records for shots blocked, free throws made and free throws attempted. He is third on the career rebounding list.

Beard was the first Bronco to score 500 or more points in a season three times. He led the team in scoring each year he played, and in rebounding three of the four years. He was selected Big Sky freshman of the year and was named to the All-Big Sky team three times.

In his senior season Beard led his team to an NCAA tournament berth with a win over Idaho in the Big Sky tournament. Following the season he began a career in professional basketball in Europe.

Needing a midseason emotional jump start, Dye convinced Robinson to once again set aside his football pads. BSU promptly ended the regular season with a seven-game winning streak. An NIT bid followed and the Broncos led Southern Illinois all but the final 10 seconds of the contest. The Salukis' only lead of the night resulted in SIU's 75-74 Pavilion win and ended the Broncos' season at 18-11.

The 1991-92 season opened with BSU's first-ever bid to the Big Apple Pre-Season NIT, with the Broncos hosting Colorado State in the Pavilion. New CSU coach Stew Morrill had never won at Boise while head coach at Montana, but he finally got one with the Rams (80-67).

After falling twice more, the Broncos reeled off nine straight wins to wrap up non-conference play. But BSU lost its first four on the Big Sky schedule and never quite recovered. Still, the Broncos recorded a 16-13 season, and the Bronco faithful poured in to watch the whirling dunks of Fikes, the gritty floor play of Trotter, the steals by Jermaine Haliburton and the inside power of Beard.

It was clear from the outset of the 1992-93 campaign that Beard aimed to assert himself in his final season. The 6'9" senior led the Broncos to titles in the Real Dairy and Albertson's Classics, scoring 63 points in the latter. He played side-by-side with his heir apparent, 7-foot sophomore John Coker, as the youngster had a team-leading 16 points and nine rebounds in a 70-50 victory over Wyoming, BSU's biggest-ever win over a WAC opponent.

Beard poured in 37 points in a marathon 107-99 double overtime loss at Idaho, probably one of the classic Big Sky games of all time. He led a road sweep of the Montana schools, only the third time the Broncos had ever accomplished that feat. The other two times BSU went on to win the Big Sky title, so there was hope the wins would be prophetic.

A number two seed (and a first round bye) in the upcoming Big Sky tournament were at stake for the Broncos in the final game of the regular season at Eastern Washington. Beard rang up a career-high 39 points in the hard-fought 85-81 win.

At the conference tourney in Moscow, the Broncos downed Weber State 69-63 to go into the championship game against Idaho. BSU was a picture of concentration, effort, emotion and execution in a 80-68 victory, avenging two regular season losses to the Vandals.

"No better way to win this championship than on this night, against this team, on this floor," said an exhilarated Dye to KBOI's Paul J. Schneider after the game. The Broncos took their Big Sky title and 21-7 record to the NCAA tournament, facing Vanderbilt in the first round in Salt Lake City. BSU was overpowered by the sharp-shooting Commodores 92-72.

The 1992-93 season marked

1992-93
Big Sky Tournament
Champions

Darnell Woods .......... Guard
Leonard Speed .......... Guard
Mike Tolman .......... Guard
Lance Vaughn .......... Guard
Damon Archibald .......... Guard
Shad Bertch .......... Guard
Sherman Morris .......... Guard/Forward
Eric Bellamy .......... Forward
Shambric Williams .......... Forward
John Coker .......... Center
Tanoka Beard .......... Center
Jim Atkinson .......... Forward

Head Coach: Bobby Dye
Assistant Coaches: George Barrios, Rod Jensen and Garry Matlock
THE MANE ATTRACTION

Dye's fourth BSU 20-win season. Beard set the all-time scoring record at BSU with 1,944 career points, eclipsing Steve Connor's record by 17. Beard also ended as the third-highest scorer in Big Sky history. He was named to the All-Conference team for the third time and was named most valuable player of the Big Sky tournament.

Senior Vaughn built on his free throw percentage record, upping it to 92.5 percent by making 62 of 67. Shambric Williams, Eric Bellamy, Sherman Morris, Darnell Woods, Damon Archibald, Mike Tolman and Coker contributed to the landmark season.

With the absence of Beard and Vaughn, the 1993-94 season could have been billed as a rebuilding year. Only two seniors — forwards Eric Bellamy and Shambric Williams — were on the squad. Because of the team's youth, play was spotty early in the season, especially on the road. But the Broncos finished strong to place fifth in the conference, good enough to qualify for the Big Sky tournament in the BSU Pavilion. Their late-season momentum carried into the tournament when victories over Montana, Weber State and Idaho State earned the Broncos their second consecutive NCAA tournament berth.

The Broncos drew the nationally ranked Louisville Cardinals for the opening game of the tournament in Sacramento, California. The Cardinals mounted a sizeable first half lead, only to see the Broncos come back to nearly pull even at the final buzzer. The Broncos held the Cardinals to 15 points below their scoring average, but ended with a 67-58 loss, leaving BSU with a 17-13 overall record.

The team was led by junior center John Coker, who emerged as the league's best shot blocker and the team's top scorer and rebounder. Sophomore Damon Archibald and freshmen Steve Shephard and Greg Lords provided stable backcourt play to complement an excellent season from forward Shambric Williams, who was named most valuable player of the Big Sky tournament.

Football 1986-93

The Broncos' search for a football coach to rebuild its winning tradition brought Skip Hall to Boise in December 1986. Hall came to the Broncos from a 12-year assistant coaching position with Don James and the Washington Huskies. Hall dedicated himself and his staff to bringing a "commitment to class" to Bronco football. He described the 1987 season as one of "getting started."

The Broncos posted a 6-5 record in 1987 but produced the number one offensive team in the Big Sky Conference and finished second in the conference in scoring defense. They were led by quarterback Vince Alcalde, tailback Chris Jackson, guard Tom DeWitz, wide receiver Eric Andrade and Big Sky Defensive Player of the Year Pete Kwiatkowski.

Highlight of the '87 campaign was an exciting 36-31 win at Nevada-Reno, with Kwiatkowski ending UNR's last-ditch attempt at the endzone with a sack on the final play of the game. Hall then led the team on a

1993-94
Big Sky Tournament Champions

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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Greg Lords</td>
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<td>Damon Archibald</td>
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<td>Eric Wilde</td>
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Head Coach: Bobby Dye
Assistant Coaches: George Barrios, Rod Jensen and Ernie Wheeler
jog around the Mackay Stadium field, later explaining that it wasn’t a victory lap, but merely a salute to 4,000-plus hoarse Bronco fans who had made the trip down from Boise.

The Broncos also played host to a WAC opponent for the first time, as Utah came to Bronco Stadium on Halloween. BSU gave the visitors a scare as the Alcalde-to-Andrade combo keyed a 27-17 fourth quarter lead. But a TD run and a TD pass by Utah quarterback Scott Mitchell gave the Utes a 31-27 win.

Other standouts that season included Jeff Lindsley, Steve Hale and Robbie Washington on offense, as well as leading tackler Mark Williams and freshman defensive back Kenny Kuehl.

Hall predicted that 1988 would be a building year. Led by quarterback Duane Halliday and the sure toe of freshman Mike Black, the Broncos surprised many people by posting an 8-4 season and earning a berth in the first round of the NCAA I-AA playoffs. The Broncos were a young squad dominated by sophomores and freshmen.

They averaged a record-low 280 yards a game on offense, but the 1988 Broncos had the heart and desire to win. Repeatedly, the Broncos came back in the closing minutes of a game to stun their opponents and delight their fans with a win. They did it in the season opener against Sam Houston State in the last 18 seconds of the game, winning 14-10 on a pass from Halliday to Terry Heffner. A Halliday to Todd Kinzel pass with 44 seconds remaining sealed Weber State’s fate with a 31-27 victory. Against the Montana Grizzlies the Broncos were down 28-24. With 23 seconds to spare, Jeff Lindsley caught a Halliday pass to win 31-28 on fourth down. BSU nearly did the same against Idaho. After falling behind 26-0 at the half, the Broncos stifled Vandal quarterback John Friesz, and caught fire before a Big Sky record crowd of 23,687. But the rally came up short and the Broncos lost 26-20.

The NCAA playoff appearance on November 26, 1988, was the first for the Broncos in seven years. The Broncos took an 8-3 record into the game against Northwestern State University (Louisiana), winner of the Southland Conference championship. The Broncos came back from a halftime deficit of 13-0 to tie the game at 13 in the third period but the Demons held the Broncos the rest of the way to win 22-13. Three Broncos from the defense made the All-Big Sky Conference first team: 

**Oops!!**

*By Brian Knight*

The last Alumni-Varsity football game was in 1988. During his pregame speech, Coach Lyle Setencich told us of a longtime tradition. BSU vice president Richard Bullington always came into the game for one play — he would try to catch a pass, run a few yards and step out of bounds.

Doc, as the players called him, was a kindly, grandfatherly figure. He wore an old uniform and an old-fashioned helmet with a single bar across the face. Coach Setencich emphasized several times that under no circumstances should we hit [tackle] Doc.

When Doc stepped onto the field I reminded the linebackers and linemen about the “no-hit” orders. The secondary was supposed to do the same. Alumni quarterback Joe Alioti threw a beautiful spiral to the waiting Doc Bullington. There was only one problem: only 10 of the 11 players got the word to leave the Doc alone.

As I dropped into my pass coverage, I heard a deafening hit. Chris Truitt had stuck his helmet into Doc, sending his feet flying. You could hear a pin drop in Bronco Stadium. Doc did not get up. Team doctors raced to his aid, paramedics rushed on the field and players surrounded the Doc.

Finally, he got up; the crowd roared as he walked off the field — but I don’t think that either Doc or Chris will ever be the same.
Erick Helgeson, Scott Russell and Kuehl. Helgeson also was named a first team All-American, while freshman Chris Thomas made his debut with over 1,000 all-purpose yards.

Bronco fans excitedly watched the Broncos demolish Stephen F. Austin State University (Texas) in the opening game of 1989. Junior college transfer Mike Virden combined with Halliday for 409 passing yards, BSU's first 400-yard effort in the air in 15 years. It would be Stephen F. Austin's only loss until the Division I-AA national championship game in December.

1989 marked the first time a Pac-10 team had ever appeared at Bronco Stadium. The September 23 game against Oregon State was a classic. The Broncos rallied from a 20-6 third quarter deficit behind 290 second half passing yards from Virden. BSU tied it at 30 on a 2-point conversion with 3:57 left, but the Beavers then drove 93 yards for the winning touchdown before 22,315 exhausted fans. The Broncos rebounded for a 41-24 win at Weber State a week later — Virden throwing three touchdowns to Ricky Hill and another to Winky White, who had 185 yards in receiving. Meanwhile, the defense held the Wildcats to a minus seven yards rushing, and Kuehl had a touchdown on a 67-yard punt return.

The Broncos won the next three at home before absorbing decisive back-to-back losses at Montana and Nevada. BSU faced Eastern Washington in its final home game, and the season's finest single individual play saved a winning season for the Broncos. BSU trailed at the half 13-0 and was still down by three starting the fourth quarter when Larry Stayner hauled in a short pass from Virden and broke seven tackles enroute to a stunning 66-yard touchdown. That gave the Broncos a lead they never relinquished in a 27-24 win. The team finished 6-5, with Helgeson, Kuehl and Thomas named All-Big Sky.

The Broncos unleashed a powerful, hungry team in 1990. The freshmen from 1987 were now seniors, and they were determined to repeat the accomplishments of the 1980 team and go for a national championship. The team came within a whisker of doing so. The confident Broncos went 8-3 on the season. Working behind an offensive line featuring Dave Koch and Dave Giacomazzo, Virden continued to find Winky White, Terry Heffner, Larry Stayner, Chris Sweeting and Sheldon Forehand. Thomas sparked the running attack, with Bart Hull often clearing a path and getting the tough yards. Led by Helgeson, Frank Robinson, Darrin Lyle, Tim O'Connor and Russell, the defense held like an immovable force.

In 1990, Helgeson, Robinson and Thomas made the All-Big Sky first team and Helgeson was named to several All-American teams, including Walter Camp, Associated Press, Kodak, Sports Network and Football Gazette.

After an unimpressive 3-2 start, the
Broncos went on a tear. They destroyed Montana 41-3, then took three straight on the road, including a memorable come-from-behind effort at Montana State. With 3:05 left in the game, MSU scored to make it 27-20 and was going for the extra point. But it was blocked by Robinson and returned by Elijah George for BSU's first-ever defensive two-point conversion. A safety then made it 27-24, and Stayner won it with 53 seconds left, pulling in a 22-yard TD pass from Virden.

A week later, the Broncos ambushed unbeaten Nevada 30-14 as 22,611 sunwashed fans roared in Bronco Stadium. BSU held the high-powered Wolf Pack to 216 total yards—14 on the ground.

The Broncos met Northern Iowa on Lyle Smith Field in the first round of the NCAA I-AA playoffs, defeating the Panthers 20-3 in a stunning defensive display. NIU was held to minus five yards rushing and only 156 yards total offense, and Robinson had three of the Broncos' six interceptions.

The next week, December 1, 1990, the nation's number one team, Middle Tennessee State, came to BSU sporting an average of 468.6 yards in total offense. The Raiders left Bronco Stadium beaten by a score of 20-13 and gaining just 168 total yards, including only 26 passing yards. Virden had a great afternoon, completing 22 of 33 passes for 236 yards and rushing for 24 yards. The most critical play proved to be Black's fake punt to the Bronco 19-yard line. Black needs nothing more than his scoring record to be remembered, but the fake punt against the Blue Raiders assured his place in Bronco history. Defensively, Helgeson, Russell, Shawn Anderson, Tim O'Connor and Robinson kept the Blue Raiders bottled up throughout the game. The next opponent: Big Sky rival Nevada-Reno.