

◀SEASON RECAP▶

CSU in first bowl since 1948

Team led by running backs, quarterback Gimenez

By Robert Weber
Emerald Sports Reporter

Forgive the Colorado State coaches, players and fans if they get a little excited about their trip to the Freedom Bowl, but the school hasn't made a post-season bowl appearance since they faced Occidental College in the 1948 Raisin Bowl.

Coach Earle Bruce, in only his second year in Fort Collins, Colo., led the Rams to an 8-4 record and a second-place finish in the Western Athletic Conference this season.

Colorado State opened the year with a come-from-behind 35-33 win at Air Force. Kevin Verdugo replaced Mike Gimenez at quarterback late in the third quarter and led the Rams to victory by completing 14 of 18 passes for 172 yards and a touchdown to split-end Greg Primus with 1:16 to play.

After a 41-5 home opener blowout over Montana State, the 2-0 Rams ran into some trouble down in Tempe, Ariz.

Before 61,344 Sun Devil fans, Arizona State dealt the Rams their first loss of the year, 31-20. In defeat, tailbacks Brian Copeland and Tony Alford each scored a touchdown.

The following weekend, Copeland and the rest of the Rams literally ran by the University of Texas-El Paso for a 38-20 home victory. Copeland rushed for a season-high 142 yards and a touchdown on only 11 carries.

For the second time in two



Mike Gimenez

road games, the Rams lost 31-20 to a nationally-ranked team their next time out.

Twenty-first ranked Arkansas took care of Colorado State by racking up 425 yards of total offense and tossing three touchdown passes.

With a 3-2 record (2-0 in the WAC), Colorado State headed home to knock off Utah 22-13. Copeland was the offensive star again as he rushed for 99 yards and a score on 21 carries. Full-back Todd Yert chipped in with 71 yards and a touchdown.

The Rams continued their home-one-week and away-the-next streak with a trip to Provo, Utah to face Ty Detmer and 11th-ranked Brigham Young.

Detmer made swiss cheese of the Ram secondary in BYU's 52-9 win by throwing for 326 yards and four touchdowns as



Todd Yert

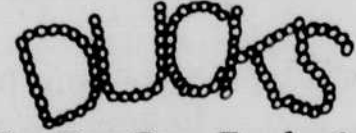
BYU gained 523 yards of total offense.

After BYU, Bruce and his squad headed home for a three-game homestand that produced consecutive wins over New Mexico (47-7), Wyoming (17-8) and Tulsa (31-13). The three wins gave Colorado State a 7-3 mark and caught the attention of bowl scouts around the country.

The win over Wyoming, which entered the game 9-0, secured a second-place finish in the WAC for the Rams.

After accepting the bowl bid, Colorado State went out and lost a big lead, and the game at Louisiana Tech, 31-30. But the Rams bounced back to knock off Hawaii in Aloha Stadium and avoid heading into the Freedom Bowl with a two-game losing streak.

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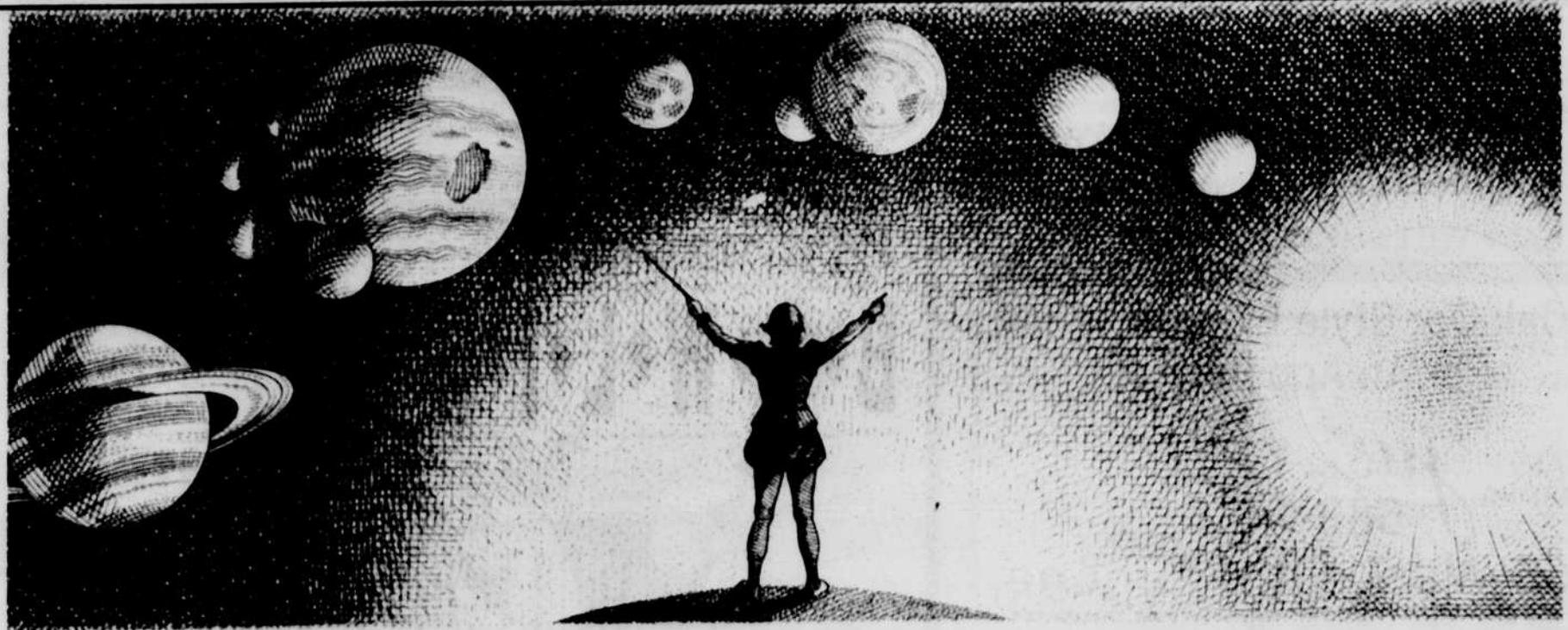
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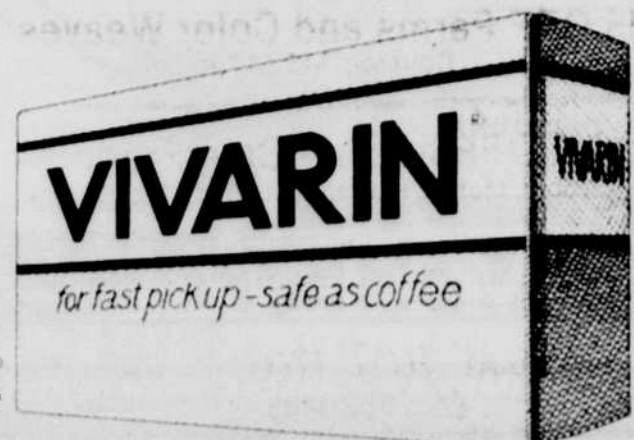
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