

HEAD COACH RICK NEUHEISEL

When Rick Neuheisel first arrived at Washington in January of 1999, he took a look around and made a decision. He decided that there was no time for feeling-out process; no time to re-build. He decided that there was no time to waste and asked the players to hop on board for the ride.

Now, two seasons later, the ride is still speeding along and the Huskies have had one of their best seasons in history. In 2000, the Huskies posted their first 10-win season since going 12-0 in 1991. They also landed their highest postseason ranking (currently No. 4) since the '91 season and are returning to the Rose Bowl for the first time since the 1992 campaign.

Washington trailed in eight of its 10 wins in 2000, showing incredible resilience and heart, not to mention strategy, in pulling off five fourth-quarter comebacks in a row.

For his efforts, Neuheisel was listed as a finalist for coach of the year by several different media outlets.

In 1999, his first season as the head football coach at Washington, Neuheisel accomplished something that none of his predecessors achieved. He guided the Huskies to a 7-5 record, including an invitation to the 1999 Culligan Holiday Bowl, becoming the first UW coach to take a team to a bowl game during his inaugural season.

Picked to finish anywhere between fifth to eighth in the preseason polls, Neuheisel's first Husky squad finished Pac-10 play with a 6-2 record and tied for second place in the conference. Quite an accomplishment considering the Huskies did not have a single player named first-team all-conference.

Husky football fans and casual sports followers alike have quickly embraced Neuheisel for the spark he has added to Washington's storied football tradition. As a public speaker, he is in high demand. Neuheisel has spoken at numerous fundraising events and generated lofty contributions with his charismatic speeches and penchant for innovative fundraising ideas.

Neuheisel took over the Washington program in January of 1999 after serving as the head football coach at Colorado from 1995 to 1998. His five-year coaching record now stands at 50-20 (.714).

Washington is the second head coaching position for the 39-year old Neuheisel, who spent seven seasons as an assistant coach prior to securing the Colorado job. He worked six years at his alma mater, UCLA, under his college coach Terry Donahue, and was an assistant coach for one season on Bill McCartney's staff in Boulder. He was named the head coach at Colorado on Nov. 29, 1994.

At Colorado, Neuheisel compiled a 33-14 (.702) record and was 3-0 in postseason bowl games. All three of his bowl games were against Pac-10 Conference opponents. He had 20 wins in his first two seasons as a college coach, which tied for the fourth-most by a first-time college coach in the Division I-A modern era. Both of those Colorado teams finished in the top-10 of the national polls.

Neuheisel had a number of "firsts" while coaching the Buffaloes:

- He became the first first-year Colorado coach to take a team to a bowl game
- The team's 10 wins in 1995 were the most ever by a first-year CU coach.
- The Buffaloes No. 4 ranking in the USA Today standings and No. 5 ranking in the final Associated Press poll were the eighth-highest rankings ever for a first-year coach.
- Neuheisel's 10 wins his first year tied for the fifth-most by a rookie.
- The 1996 Colorado team set a school record by winning 10 consecutive road games.
- The 1997 Buffalo team produced three All-Americans, including Butkus Award winner Matt Russell.
- He is only the fourth coach to guide his first two teams to a pair of 10-win seasons.

The road that led Neuheisel into coaching was an interesting, if not a unique one. After finishing his college career with a spectacular performance in the 1984 Rose Bowl in which he was named the game's Most Valuable Player, he graduated from UCLA in May, 1984, with a bachelor's degree in political science. Neuheisel had a solid 3.4 grade point average, the highest of all graduating football seniors, and was named Academic All-Pac 10. He won the Jack R. Robinson and Paul I. Wellman awards from the

school to honor his academic excellence, and also earned an NCAA postgraduate scholarship as he aspired to attend law school. Neuheisel was inducted into the Rose Bowl's Hall of Fame in 1998.

He played two seasons (1984,1985), with the San Antonio Gunslingers of the United States Football League. Following the 1985 USFL season (which was over by the end of summer), he decided to use his NCAA scholarship award and enrolled in law school at Southern California. The following summer, he joined the UCLA staff as a volunteer coach, specifically to tutor Troy Aikman on the UCLA offense. Aikman matured under Neuheisel's tutelage, and the two remain close friends to this day.

In 1987, Neuheisel played in the National Football League. He suited up for three games for the San Diego Chargers (starting two), and still holds a team record for completion percentage in a game (81.8, going 18-of-22 for 217 yards and a touchdown at Tampa Bay). He completed 40-of-59 passes in those three games for 367 yards and one touchdown, and added another touchdown rushing. Another claim to his short-lived NFL fame is that he is the last player to rush for a one-point conversion, running in a muffed PAT attempt at Cincinnati. This is forever a trivia answer, with the NFL now sporting the two-point conversion.

He closed out the season with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, dressing out for two games, but never getting the chance to play. He wore the same number at Tampa Bay (No. 7) that he wore for San Diego.

Neuheisel would again return to his alma mater, but this time in the capacity of a full-time assistant coach in charge of the quarterbacks, which he would coach for the next two seasons before switching to receivers coach in 1990.

While an assistant at UCLA, Neuheisel continued his studies in his pursuit of a law degree. He graduated from the University of Southern California School of Law in 1990 with his juris doctor degree. He would be sworn into the Arizona State Bar Association in May of 1991, and the Washington, D.C. Bar in March, 1993.

Neuheisel's began his collegiate playing career as a walk-on at UCLA, holding for kicker John Lee, and eventually battled Steve Bono for the starting quarterback job by his senior year. He secured the starting job four games into the regular season and quarterbacked the Bruins to the Pac-10 championship in 1983, earning honorable mention All-Pac 10 honors in the process. He was named the Most Valuable Player in the 1984 Rose Bowl when UCLA beat Illinois, 45-9. In that game, Neuheisel completed 22-of-31 passes for 298 yards and four TDs, including a pair to Karl Dorrell, Washington's former offensive coordinator.

Neuheisel completed 198 of 290 passes for 2,480 yards and 15 touchdowns in his UCLA career, which at the time placed him sixth on the Bruins' all-time passing yards list. He still holds school records in completion percentage for both a single season (69.3 as a senior) and career (68.3). Another school record he still holds, completion percentage in a single game, set an NCAA record at the time; Neuheisel completed 25 of 27 passes (including 18 straight at one point) for 287 yards against Washington in 1983, a remarkable 92.6 percent.

He graduated from McClintock High School in Tempe, Ariz., in 1979, and was the school's most outstanding athlete his senior year as he lettered in football (quarterback), basketball (guard) and baseball (shortstop, outfield, pitcher). He is a member of McClintock's Hall of Fame.

Richard Gerald Neuheisel, Jr., was born on Feb. 7, 1961, in Madison, Wis., where he made his debut as a head coach when CU beat Wisconsin 43-7. He is married to the former Susan Wilkinson, and they have three children, Jerry (8), Jack (5) and Joe (3).

Neuheisel's father, Dick, was one of the original Tempe Diablos, a group which helped found the Fiesta Bowl, and is a former president of Sister Cities International, a worldwide

goodwill organization. The son of Dick and Jane, Rick has three sisters, Nancy, Katie and Deborah. From his home on Lake Washington, he occasionally drives his boat to work. He has been a semi-regular participant on the Celebrity Golf Association Tour. In 1999, a month before the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach, he shot a 76 on the course.

Neuheisel's Coaching Record

Year	School	Overall						Conference					
		W	L	Pct.	Pts	Opp.		W	L	Pct	Pts	Opp	Place
1995	Colorado	10	2	.833	444	240		5	2	.714	226	178	tie-2nd
1996	Colorado	10	2	.833	352	220		7	1	.825	221	126	2nd
1997	Colorado	5	6	.455	300	295		3	5	.375	246	228	tie-4th
1998	Colorado	8	4	.667	251	210		4	4	.500	155	169	4th
1999	Washington	7	5	.583	331	302		6	2	.750	231	188	tie-2nd
2000	Washington	10	1	.909	353	246		7	1	.875	258	183	tie-1st
Totals	6 years	50	20	.714	2031	1513		32	15	.681	1337	1072	—