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Utah Traditions



Originally referred to as the Redskins, the University of Utah officially adopted the nickname **Utes** for its athletic teams in 1972. The school uses the nickname with permission of the Ute Tribal Council.

"What is a Ute?" The Utes are a great basin Indian tribe. The Utes were one of the first tribes to acquire the horse from the Spanish, which transformed their culture and enabled them to become resourceful and valiant. The Utes speak their own language which is derived from the Uto-Aztecan language family.

Currently, there are more than 3,000 Ute tribal members and half of them live on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation in northeastern Utah. The Utes are important contributors to Utah's economy through distribution of their energy resources and raising stock.

The Pride of Utah Marching Utes began in the 1940s as a military band. In the turbulent '60s, support for the band dwindled, and in 1969, the Associated Students for the University of Utah (ASUU) discontinued its funding. The band was revived in 1976, and since then, the "Pride of Utah" Marching Utes have performed at all home football games, as well as numerous NFL and college bowl games.

To the victor goes the **Beehive Boot**. The authentic pioneer boot has been awarded annually since 1971 to the Utah school with the best record against instate foes. The schools that compete for the boot are Utah, Brigham Young and Utah State. In its 39-



year history, the Beehive Boot has been awarded to Utah 11 times (1978, 1988, 1993, '94, '95, '99, 2002, '03, '04, '05 and '08), BYU 22 times and Utah State six times.

The Block U (elevation 5,300 feet above sea level) was built in the foothills bordering the Utah campus 103 years ago. Lights on the 100-foot-tall landmark are illuminated primarily for athletic events and notify people in the Salt Lake valley that the Utes are playing at home (the lights flash after a Utah victory).

Originally built with lime, the Block U was replaced by a cement version in 1907. In 1969, the design was modified and lights were installed. A fund-raising campaign in 2006 raised \$400,000 to renovate the aging landmark. Slabs of concrete and steel rebar now reinforce the 5,000 feet of surface area. Another major improvement was the installation of light emitting diode (LED) red and white lights, which are controlled through a wireless system.

Utah's Student Fan Club, the MUSS, is one of the most avid and vocal student fan clubs in the nation, is nearly 6,000 strong at Ute home football games. The name MUSS was originally derived from the school fight song lyrics (... No other gang of college men dare meet us in the muss). Members now refer to MUSS as an acronym for "Mighty Utah Student Section."

MUSS members are easily identified by their customized tee-shirts and their policy of standing throughout the entire game. They have a number of other traditions during football games, including the **Third Down Jump**, in which members jump around and make noise every time the opposing team prepares for a third down play. Other rituals include the **U of U Chop**, which occurs every time the band plays a specific percussion song and involves MUSS members forming a U with their hands and "chopping" to the beat of the music, and the **First Down Chant** (members raise their hands in unison, yelling "first down," and mimic the referees by pointing their arm in the direction of the first down).

The line of "fives" hanging in front of the MUSS section refers to the **False Start Tally**. Whenever the opposing team is charged with a false start, the MUSS hangs a numeral five in front of its section indicating a five-yard penalty.

Every time the Utes score, the band plays the school fight song, signaling the MUSS to sing along to the words of **Utah Man**. After every game, the Ute team members congregate in front of the MUSS section and join in the singing of Utah Man.

Watch for the MUSS to regularly **Throw up a U**, a tradition that began at the Utah women's gymnastics meets in 2004 and soon caught on with all the Ute teams and fans. It involves forming the U mentioned in the U of U Chop and raising it toward the sky.

The MUSS currently sponsors fan clubs for the Utah football, men's basketball, volleyball and gymnastics teams. The football team began sporting a MUSS decal on the back of its helmets in 2004.

Utah Man Fight Song

[Utah Man Audio Clip](#)

VERSE

I am a Utah man, sir, and I live across the green. Our gang, it is the jolliest that you have ever seen. Our coeds are the fairest and each one's a shining star. Our yell, you hear it ringing through the mountains near and far.

CHORUS

Who am I, sir? A Utah Man am I. A Utah Man, sir, and will be 'til I die; Ki-yi! We're up to snuff; we never bluff, we're game for any fuss. No other gang of college men dare meet us in the muss. So fill your lungs and sing it out and shout it to the sky, we'll fight for dear old Crimson, for a Utah Man am I.

VERSE

And when we prom the avenue, all lined up in a row, and arm in arm and step in time as down the street we go. No matter if a freshman green or in a senior's gown, the people all admit we are the warmest gang in town.

CHORUS (same)

VERSE

We may not live forever on this jolly good old sphere, but while we do we'll live a life of merriment and cheer. And when our college days are o'er and night is drawing nigh, with parting breath we'll sing that song: "A Utah Man Am I." Go Utes!





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