

From Collegiate Champion to Physical Therapist: Lauren Fairchild's Journey to the CSU Pueblo Hall of Fame

For athletes who reach the pinnacle of collegiate sports, the road is rarely paved with comfort—it is built on trust, relentless hard work, and a willingness to step far outside one's comfort zone. For Lauren Fairchild, a versatile standout in Colorado State University Pueblo history, that journey ultimately led to a 2019 NCAA Division II national championship, a doctorate, and now, induction into the CSU Pueblo Hall of Fame for the Class of 2026.

Discovering CSU Pueblo

Growing up in Texas, Fairchild had never heard of CSU Pueblo until a recruitment letter arrived offering a free application [\[02:26\]](#). Encouraged by her parents not to pass up the opportunity, she flew to Colorado in November 2015 to visit the campus [\[02:37\]](#).

Meeting with Coach Morris during her recruiting visit set the tone for her collegiate career. Rather than just offering a standard pitch, Morris pulled up *TFRRS.org* (a collegiate track and field ranking system) and highlighted the exponential progress of former standout Andrea Tuck [\[02:46\]](#). Impressed by Morris's deep understanding of the biomechanics of running and his coaching style, Fairchild's father agreed it would be a great fit—on the condition that Coach Morris take good care of his daughter nearly 700 miles away from home [\[03:22\]](#).

Embracing the Uncomfortable

Fairchild quickly learned that Coach Morris's training regimen would test her limits. During her first week of offseason practice, the sprinters were told they had to run two miles—a daunting task for an athlete whose previous warmup max was just two laps around the track [\[03:41\]](#). By her sophomore year, Morris convinced her to join the cross-country team, leading to a grueling three-mile run up a mountain in St. Isabel [\[03:59\]](#).

"I trusted Coach Morris and I figured this must help me somehow," Fairchild reflected during her acceptance speech [\[04:11\]](#). And it did. Each year, she continued to improve,

driven by the desire to stand on top of the podium alongside her peers [\[04:18\]](#).

Reaching the Summit: The 2019 National Championship

By 2019, Fairchild's continuous personal bests in the long jump earned her a spot at the indoor national championships in Pittsburg, Kansas [\[04:31\]](#). Entering the competition ranked seventh, she executed a meticulously crafted routine with Coach Morris and Coach McKinnon [\[04:37\]](#).

Her performance shattered expectations. Not only did she secure a personal best and a school record, but she leaped 20 feet, 1 inch to claim the NCAA Division II indoor long jump national title [\[00:33, 04:56\]](#).

"That was one of the greatest moments of my life," Fairchild shared, crediting her supportive family, pushing teammates, and guiding coaches [\[05:01\]](#).

Beyond the Medals: Memories and Culture

While the national championship remains a career-defining highlight, Fairchild noted that the true magic happened in the moments between—braving blizzards and record-breaking Pueblo windstorms around the track, jumping over trash cans in practice (which she initially mistook for a prank), and sharing Domino's pizza in Gunnison after racing at 7,000 feet of elevation [\[05:19\]](#).

Success at CSU Pueblo was fueled by a shared team culture. Whether watching Jenna lift massive weights, tracking teammates through early morning workouts, or racing 200s with the sprint squad for an extra challenge, the athletes constantly fed off each other's momentum [\[06:24\]](#).

A New Chapter

After graduation, Fairchild faced a crossroads: she was close enough to qualifying for the Olympic Trials in Oregon to consider extending her track career [\[06:53\]](#). Ultimately, however, she chose to pivot toward her next chapter—pursuing a career in physical therapy [\[07:01\]](#).

Earning her doctorate from Nova Southeastern University, Fairchild is now a licensed physical therapist practicing in Dallas, Texas, and has even transitioned from dreading a two-mile run to training for her third half-marathon [\[01:33, 07:20\]](#).

Reflecting on her journey from a hesitant freshman to a Hall of Famer, Fairchild offered a simple formula for her success: she was an athlete who wanted to get better, trusted her coach, and chose to give 100% effort every single day [\[06:00\]](#).

Watch the full interview and induction speech here: [26 Hall of Fame Fairchild](#)

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