



Tamara Ards



Sean Smith



Chris Abuan



Patty Roberts

FROM WALK-ON TO ALL-AMERICAN

There's something magical in the air at 5,345 feet above sea level. It's something that contributes to developing blue collar, walk-on athletes into All-Americans at Colorado. Combining its reputation of academics and athletics, the coaching staff at CU has had incredible success with non-recruited athletes that have had the drive, determination and work ethic to become All-Americans.

CHRIS ABUAN • 2002 Walk-on – 2007 4x100-m Outdoor All-American

Chris Abuan was a hard worker for the Buffs and showed improvement throughout the years. His biggest impact was in the relays. Abuan is a member of nine of the top 10 times in the 4x100-m relay, where he ran the third leg seven times. In 2007, Abuan and the relay team of George Pincock, Jeremy Dodson and Ryan Campbell placed second in the Big 12 Championships and were the first men's relay team to qualify for the NCAA meet since 1972 after placing fourth in the regionals. The team took sixth at nationals with a time of 39.98.

TAMARA ARDS • 1992 Walk-on – 1996 4x400-m Outdoor All-American

A three-time state 400-m champion, Tamara Ards ran a 56.20 in the event as a freshman and would shave two seconds off her time by her junior year to become the school record holder in the event, running a 54.22 at the 1994 Big Eight Outdoor Championships. As the second leg of CU's 4x400-m relay team, she combined with teammates Tasha Ward, Heather Sterlin and Leona Russell to win the event at the final Big Eight Championship in 1996 and go on to finish seventh in the event at that year's NCAA Championships in Eugene, Ore., in another school record 3:33.07.

JAY CLECKLER • 1991 Walk-on – 1994 Cross Country All-American

Jay Cleckler, was conceivably one of the hardest working guys on the '94 cross country squad. He had begun his collegiate career as walk-on competing in only one meet, which progressed to four meets as a sophomore, which he matched his junior season. He came into his own during his senior campaign when he scored in all six varsity races, including the Big Eight Championships, the NCAA District VII qualifier and the NCAA Championships where he ran his first All-American race.

JON COOPER • 1993 Walk-on – 1994, 1995 Cross Country All-American

Cooper made an immediate impact on the Colorado men's cross country team when he walked on after transferring from Rice. In his first season he traveled to the NCAA Championships as an alternate, but did not compete. A year later he finished 33rd of 178 runners for his first all-American honor. In 1995's national championship race, he was Colorado's fourth finisher, 48th overall to repeat his All-American title.

MIKE FRIEDBERG • 1996 Walk-on- 1998, 1999 Cross Country All-American

In 1996 Mike Friedberg ran in three cross country races. He redshirted the 1997 season and a year later he was one of only three runners to compete in all six races, he finished eighth in the season opener at Colorado State, third at the Rocky Mountain Shootout, 32nd at the loaded Bob Timmons Invite, third at the Big 12 Championships, fifth at the Mountain Region Championships and ran to his first All-American title with a 34th place effort at the national championships. In 1999 he was CU's No. 3 runner during the season, but experienced prevailed and was CU's No. 1 guy at the NCAA Championships in Bloomington and was No. 2 a year later.

MATT NAPIER • 1995 Walk-on – 1997 Cross Country All-American

In his first collegiate season Napier competed in the Shootout and at the Fort Hays State Invitational. As a sophomore, he scored in two of the three postseason races. Originally scheduled to redshirt his junior season, he was forced into action late in the season due to team injuries. In his first race, Oct. 18, he finished third overall at the Tiger Invitational. In the postseason he finished 11th in the league championships and was the individual runner-up, at the Mountain Region Championships. His third season culminated in his first all-America certificate at the NCAA Championships with a 39th-place finish.

GEORGE PINCOCK • 2003 Walk-on – 2007 4x100-m Outdoor All-American

George Pincock earned a spot on the varsity squad as a freshman by placing eighth in the 200-meter dash and scoring in the 4x100 and 4x400-m teams. Pincock is a member of 11 of the 12 best times in the 4x100-m relay. In 2007, Pincock and the relay team of Jeremy Dodson, Chris Abuan and Ryan Campbell placed second in the Big 12 Championships and

became the first men's relay team to qualify for the NCAA meet since 1972 after placing fourth in the regionals. The team took sixth at nationals with a time of 39.98.

PATTY ROBERTS • 1992 Walk-on – 1995 Indoor 5,000-m All-American/ 1994, 1995 Cross Country All-American

Roberts didn't compete in cross until her second season. A year later she was the individual runner-up at the Big Eight Championships and an All-American with a 13th-place finish at the NCAA championships. She took the individual conference title in '96 and followed up with a 32nd-place effort at the NCAAs for her second all-America cross country honor. 1995 continued to be a success on the track where she was an indoor 5k and outdoor 10k All-American.

SHAYNE WILLE • 1995 Walk-on – 1996 Indoor 3,000-m All-American/1997 Outdoor 3,000-m All-American

A transfer from Vermont in 1995, Wille failed to make the Buffs' seven-person roster that would compete at the NCAA Cross Country Championships. Three months later she was an all-American in the indoor 3k. During the 1996 fall season, she was Colorado's No. 2 runner, and although she competed in all three postseason race, just missed all-American status at the national championships with a 45th place effort. She set her sights again on the track where she was the Big 12 indoor champion in both the mile and 3,000-m distances and an all-American in the latter. The outdoor season would prove even better where she repeated her conference titles, and she earned her second all-American honor in the outdoor 3,000-m with a third place, school-record finish of 9:06.86.

SEAN SMITH • 1998 Walk-on – 2000 All-American

Smith ran in three non-varsity races in 1998 with a pair of top 20 finishes at the Fort Hays Tiger Invitational and NIKE 3 Series race. In 1999 he went into the national championships with five races under his belt. He earned all-conference and all-region honors before finishing in the top half of the NCAA Championship field. On All-American pace from the first race of the 2000 season, he would score in all five varsity contests, repeat his all-conference and all-region honors with career-best efforts before finishing 44th for the last All-American certificate doled out in Ames, Iowa.