

Longo receives college football scholarship

- 1 When Becca Longo signed her letter of intent to play college American football on National Signing Day on February 1, she was excited about the personal milestone in her own life. Moments later, she discovered that it was a huge, history-making moment for women in sports, too. Longo is the first female to receive a college football scholarship. She signed with Adams State University in Alamosa, Colorado, as a kicker, the same position she played in high school. “I had no idea,” Longo tells People Magazine. “It didn’t really kick in until a couple of hours after, I just thought I was signing a piece of paper to go play the sport I love again. Even right now, I’m still shocked. It just doesn’t feel real.”
- 2 Growing up with a brother 11 years older than she was, 18-year-old Longo said there wasn’t much opportunity for shared interests between the siblings – except for football, their “happy medium”. Her older brother played on his high school team, and would pass around a ball with his sister on the weekends. There was a female player on his high school team, too, so he didn’t think anything of it.
- 3 So when high school rolled around, Longo tried out for the American football team. She started thinking that football was something she wanted to pursue at a higher level. She recorded a highlights film to showcase her skills, and sent it out to a number of schools. She received multiple responses, one of which was from Adams State University. After her season wrapped up, the offensive coordinator traveled to Longo’s hometown of Chandler, Arizona, to speak with her in person about attending the school – and a potential football scholarship. A month later, she visited Adams State, and “fell in love” with the school. “Everyone was so warm and welcoming,” she says of her visit to the school. “I just loved everything about it.”
- 4 Since her story has started gaining national attention, Longo says she’s received support from people all over the country. But that hasn’t always been the case. She received pushback for her decision to play football in the first place, and then, to pursue the sport at a higher level, “all the time,” she says. Before her first-ever high school football game, Longo, like the rest of her teammates, wore her jersey to school. Countless classmates made fun of her, asking her if she was wearing her own jersey or her boyfriends’. “I got a lot of negativity, and people saying I couldn’t do it,” she said. “But that’s just what pushed me to do what I’m doing.”

- 5 Her Basha High School teammates, whom Longo calls her “brothers”, and her high school coach have never treated her any differently than any other member of the team. They were even the ones who encouraged her to try to play in college. The experience of playing alongside them is one Longo says she’ll cherish forever. “It’s just like hanging out with your best friends every day after school,” she says. “That’s what they are to me, they’re my brothers. I’ve created memories with them that I’m going to carry for the rest of my life.”
- 6 And from the start, her Adams State experience was similar. Longo says that in her conversations with Timm Rosenbach, head coach for Adams State (and a former quarterback) and other Adams State coaching and recruiting staff, her gender was never a topic of conversation. “He didn’t treat me like a girl,” she says. “He treats me like a football player.” Rosenbach echoed that sentiment in an interview with the Arizona Republic. “I don’t look at it that way,” he said. “My wife is a former pro athlete. I see Becca Longo as a football player who earned it.”
- 7 As for life after Adams State? Longo says that she’s focusing on the present for now, but wouldn’t mind making history in the National Football League, too. “If the opportunity was provided, I’d definitely take it,” she says. “But I’m just trying to grasp what’s going on right now.” And for those who want to follow in her football boots? Longo says: “People need to stop listening to others and stop letting them influence their mindset. They just need to go and do what they love.”

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