

Glen Sefcik:  
Coaching Spotlight

1. You've coached track and field a long time - what are a couple of memories that stand out?

First real impressions of my early career:

I coached my first national champion in Cross Country (NAIA) in 1976. My athlete from Eastern New Mexico University won the meet in Kenosha, WI. I also had worked with the 3<sup>rd</sup>-place finisher when I was a graduate assistant at Angelo State University. That same season my outdoor track and field team at Eastern New Mexico University finished 3<sup>rd</sup> at the national meet in Arkadelphia, Ark.

I was selected as an assistant coach/administrator for the Visa Decathlon Gold Medal program, which for two Olympiads was an outstanding opportunity for me to experience world-class athletes and competition. I was selected as the coach for the Jim Thorpe Decathlon Championship against Germany in which we won the dual meet at San Luis Obispo, CA.

2. You've studied at the International Olympic Academy in Greece. Can you tell us what the Academy teaches and how you became involved?

The aim of the International Olympic Academy is to preserve and spread the Olympic Spirit, study and implement the educational and social principles of Olympism and consolidate the scientific basis of the Olympic Ideal in conformity with the principles laid down by the ancient Greeks.

The US Olympic Committee and US Olympic Academy selected me based on a submission of a curricular project to include the Academy's mission in the USATF Coaching Education Program. As a result of my participation, I was able to research the ancient Olympic Games while in attendance at Olympia, Greece. The research resulted in creating the Philosophy section of the USATF Coaching Education Curriculum.

3. What's your track and field background as an athlete?

I was a multi-sport high school athlete with specialization in track and field. I was a sprinter, hurdler, and long jumper. I finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 220-yard dash in Region my senior year, failing to qualify for the State Meet.

4. Who are your track and field / coaching mentors, and what have you learned from them?

Jack Paterson, the University of Texas-Austin, was my first collegiate coach. His ethics and moral character model were a perfect example of integrity. He inspired me to continue my dream of becoming a collegiate coach.

Cleburne Price, the University of Texas-Austin, taught me organizational skills, discipline, and dedication to the sport. My association with him continued after graduation as I became one of the Games Committee members of the Texas Relays.

Jack Daniels, Professor at the University of Texas-Austin and assistant coach, taught me the principles of Physiology and the science of training. As a lab assistant, I was involved in several research projects he published.

David Noble, Angelo State University, instilled in me the importance of biomechanics and technique. In addition, his personality and his devotion to his student athletes showed me the value of coach-athlete relationships and teamwork.

Tom Tellez, UCLA Assistant Coach, was an inspiration to me in my early years of coaching with enhancement of technique and biomechanics. Due to his success with great athletes, I began to attend clinics and research articles he had published. He later moved on to the University of Houston, and my relationship with him continued to flourish.

Joe Vigil, Adams State University, was Chairman for the USATF Coaching Education Committee and involved me in several areas of curricular development and research. His outstanding success helped me create a coaching model for endurance athletes that proved to be quite successful when combined with the knowledge I gained from Jack Daniels.

5. Early in your career, you coached the Saudi National and Olympic teams. How did this transpire?

Contacted by Berny Wagner, then the Director of the Track and Field Federation, set up interviews with Saudi Arabian Olympic Coach Selection Committee. Once selected, I was stationed in Jeddah, SA with responsibilities of developing sprint/hurdle/relays athletes for Olympic Development. Due to the boycott of the 1980 Olympic Games, we attended an alternate competition for all Islamic countries in Izmir, Turkey, where my athletes won Gold Medals in the 200 and 4X100 events.

6. You're known as a decathlon, sprints and hurdles coach: can you share some of your success stories and advice for younger coaches?

The best story would be the NCAA National Championship at Boise, Idaho in 1995 where five of my athletes from Stephen F. Austin attained All-American status and our team finished 22<sup>nd</sup> in the nation: two decathletes, high jumper, triple jumper, and 110 hurdler.

Advice for younger coaches is to study the event areas of track and field with continuing research in the sports sciences. The certifications provided by USATF and USTFCCA are excellent opportunities to develop your coaching skills. It's extremely important that

knowledge is a key indicator of coaching skill. However, one must have the wisdom to apply the knowledge attained and use critical thinking skills to formulate in a coach-athlete relationship that reaches goals and aspirations established.

7. You've coached Colonels and Command Sergeant Majors at the Pre-Command Course for the US Army in leadership and development as well as leaders in the, Department of Defense-DLA, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) How did you get involved with the US Military and government?

A track teammate of mine from the University of Texas-Austin had been working as an inspirational speaker on the national circuit for several years after our graduation. I began to attend and sometimes participate in his presentations and speeches over the years. I had also worked as a ghostwriter for a novel he was working on. He eventually developed a partnership with Ret. Lt. General Lawson Magruder III who was instrumental in securing a government contract to provide leadership seminars to Brigade and Battalion commanders at the School for Command Preparation at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. I was hired as a personal coach for Colonels, Lt. Colonels, and Command Sargent Majors to interpret a 360 survey and debrief the participants on their leadership skills and help develop a leadership action plan for them to refine their leadership skills.

8. You're also an author. What have you written, or are currently working on?

I published "Memoirs of a Dead Man" and "The Professor's Journal" in 2015 but took them both out of circulation shortly after release. I am currently working on revised editions of the books and plan to re-publish soon. It's a novel based on a philosophy for finding balance in life I have termed as the "Dimensional Hierarchy."

9. Hypothetical: you are in charge of U.S. Collegiate Track & Field: what changes do you institute to better the sport?

Marketing strategies designed at focusing on Track and Field as the purest form of athletics. Establishing top-ten lists that depict the best performers in the nation and also the world. Soliciting sponsorship for each of the event areas is paramount to develop funding and television exposure. This was evident when VISA supported the Decathlon.

Examples might be; Sprint Telephone Company sponsoring the sprinting events, and maybe AT&T sponsoring the long distance endurance events, etc.

10. How does coaching internationally differ than coaching in the Unites States?

The club system and personal coaches are prevalent in the international systems verses collegiate system with educational institution control. The national teams of other countries

usually train in Olympic Training Centers or independent sporting facilities, while the US is totally dependent on the governing bodies of the NCAA and other collegiate organizations, which places restrictions on the development of athletes due to their educational commitments.

11. Finally - you've endured a couple of health scares over the past few years. How are you feeling, and are you still coaching privately?

In the Spring and early Summer of 2018, I was struck down by a severe bacterial infection that resulted in destroying my aortic and mitral valves that required open-heart surgery. It was to be a medical journey that ran its course over almost five months of major surgeries, hospital stays and doctor visits. In 2020 I was diagnosed with colon cancer and just completed chemotherapy treatments. I have recovered fully and feel extremely thankful that my strength and endurance has returned.

I'm currently coaching a HS Discus thrower and a junior high decathlete prospect as a personal coach. Plans to develop a registered USATF Club for competition are in the works.