



**A
COACHING
CATCH UP
WITH SEAN**

What is your track and field background?

I started in the sport in 1976 when, after watching the Montreal Olympics decathlon, thought that was something I wanted to try and do. I got involved in the Victoria Track and Field Club, and for the next 9 years tried to be the best decathlete I could (which turned out to be very average!). In the past decade or so, I've returned to masters athletics competitions and discovered the pure fun again that this sport has to offer.



When and why did you start coaching?

I started coaching in the early 1980s, and got my first technical certificate in 1982. After that I coached for a number of years (from the JDs to high school ages), had some time away for family and career, and have been back coaching regularly for about the past 20 years.

How did you get involved with coach education?

I'm one of those "information junkies". Whatever I'm involved in, I have a passion for learning more about. More recently, the requirement for formal training and certification in the last 10 years has rekindled that desire to learn and continue to grow. There is so much information available now that just wasn't accessible 40 years ago!

What is the most rewarding part of your role as a coach?

My biggest reward, trite as it seems, is to see when the athletes improve and are fulfilling their dreams and hopes as an athlete, at whatever level that is for them.

What are your core values as a coach?

I try to be honest, forthright and transparent with those I work with. I may not be the best coach (far from it), but I will give them my best efforts. As a learning facilitator? I carry the same values to those embarking on coaching.



How has becoming a learning facilitator influenced your coaching?

I think it's make me a better coach. It has confirmed, reconfirmed and continues to ground me in the fundamentals of our sport and the practice of coaching. It continually makes me re-examine "why do we do it this way". And I've been really fortunate to connect with so many talented coaches, both as a LF and just being in the sport, that I'm always hearing and learning something new.

What are your goals as a coach?
How will you measure the success of these goals?

After 40(+) years my goals remain tied to the rewards. I want to help the athletes do better. They're trusting me to help them and I want to live up to that trust.



If you could watch any track and field performance in history live, what would it be?

This is the hardest question! I'm not sure I can narrow it down to a single performance, or event, or even a decade or point in time.

If there was one piece of advice you'd like to pass off to other coaches, what would it be?

Get to know the athletes as people. Coaching has a science side, but it also has an "art" side and that means knowing who you're working with as an individual, their hopes, dreams, worries, concerns and so on. Coach the person.

Who do you look up to the most in track and field?

I have influencers I have followed for a few years to decades (such as Vern Gambetta, Dan Pfaff, Steve Magness), but I reserve enormous admiration for the grassroots volunteers who coach, officiate and make this sport happen. They give their best, and not because there's a financial incentive. It's hard not to be humbled by their dedication.

What is your most memorable coaching/LF moment to date?

In the last few years, aside from the pandemic, I have noticed what seems to be a reduction in the physical literacy of some of our young athletes entering the sport. I find we having to teach them how to run, jump or throw at all, let alone in the context of track and field. Having a JD athlete get over a hurdle where a short time earlier they literally did not know how to jump, did not know how to make their body leave the ground, is hugely rewarding, knowing the impact on that person's life, regardless of the sport.



What are your hobbies outside of track and field?

I've had various things that keep me amused. I play guitar daily, and for about 20 years was a private pilot/aerobatic pilot. Now, I have three lovely grandkids that I delight in and who live in the same city...they're my flat-out favourite!