

## A History

### Around the Course and Down the Track with “Doc”

#### A Conversation with

Spencer Sielschott: NMTCCA Director 2005 to present

Doc: What points in your life helped you develop a passion for athletics?

Spencer: Passion for sports evolves from playing sports in the neighborhood, high school sports, college intramurals, league games, tournaments, to coaching elementary, junior and senior high sports; my passion for sports now markets into my understanding that sports involvement creates a better tomorrow. Our influence brings out a myriad of positive returns.

This means as a coach, we need to be up to date on the best practices, how to educate and communicate our purposes to others, and learn how and why we promote the future values from commitment, dedication, and hard work. So, today I am more excited to coach coaches through my attentions to our two associations. I am privileged to have this vehicle to drive our coaching directions toward sharing our futures as coaches; we know positive futures are important and relevant.

Doc: Who were your mentors, advisors, and examples of success?

Spencer: I was fortunate to land in Gallup, New Mexico, as a teacher that was expected to coach sports. Those many years in Gallup gave me a tremendous opportunity ‘to learn by doing.’ I did fundamental and consistent practices, though not specific to event development.

I met Curtis Williams during my coaching experiences and involvements in Gallup. Although, I tried to be a basketball coach, he saw me as an assistant that could help him with cross country and track & field at Gallup High School. He saw my potential to coach as a head coach at the high school level. My quest for asking questions, going to clinics, and experiencing tradition, dedication, commitment, and hard work set me on my pathway to here, today. His guidance and help in all facets of coaching was infectious. From Curtis, I learned how to create training processes, how to guide behavior and expectations, what it means to be a ‘full serve’ program; why it is important and necessary to give back to our coaching profession, why discipline and honesty guides others to act with furthering the right way to do efforts, and to honor all for his/her commitments. Curtis and I are brothers, which means we have had great and ordinary times together but also hard difficult ones, too. Together we made a coaching team that mimic what was expected of all Gallup teams.

I became the NMTCCA clinic director suddenly in 2005 after the unexpected death of Chris Jaramillo. The selection process for the clinic directorship had no systematic methods for choosing Chris’ replacement. Adam Kedge, a longtime friend of Chris

Jaramillo, called me with the question, "Do you want to be the NMTCCCA clinic director?" I do not recall his reason for why he called me.

The journey began with no experience base just my reliance upon fellow coaches Jim Edwards, Larry Chavez, and Lawrence Apodaca. We found our way to assemble the clinic for 2006. We created a new format that entailed 18 sessions, began the 'Chris Jaramillo' awards luncheon to honor the Cross Country and Track & Field Coaches of the Year, and Doug Dorame's idea to honor the New Mexico athletes who furthered their success at the Olympics, the Olympic Trials, and/or college.

From 2006-2014, we honored many New Mexico high school student athletes who fit these criteria. We honored these athletes the first time: Janet Trujillo (Eldorado/Auburn), David Crummaker (Las Cruces/Georgia Tech), George Young (Silver City/3 Olympics), Brandon Leslie (Gallup/Olympic trials), Shelia Burrell (Rio Grande/Olympics), and Ryan Tolbert (Clovis/Vanderbilt). Over these years, our many New Mexico athletes spoke to how their experiences as New Mexico high school athletes helped them with their transitions toward success.

Doc: Give us a brief overview of your job.

Spencer: These are the tasks I have been doing for 18 years. I organize our annual clinic, which entails finding speakers, finding contact information, and corresponding. I then arrange their transportation, arrival and departure, hotel accommodations and presentations. The day of the clinic, I record names of coaches who attend our pole vault safety certification and post them on our website, set up and tear down equipment, organize NMTCCA board of directors meeting, general session, and awards luncheon/breakfast. This means I have arranged with NMHSCA costs for all facets: airfares, stipends, hotel (rooms, food, AV equipment), and incidentals. Meantime, between our clinics, I email coaches with current information, answer their questions, and remind them to join.

During my time as NMTCCA Director, I wrote our mission statement, created our logo, invited and included all associations to our board of director meetings, and started our Hall of Fame. Along the way, I increased the board membership to include from each region a representative from small and big schools.

As our association follows our agenda, presidents have made many projects that have improved our mission. One notable project came from Kent Hitchens-our Sepulveda Scholarship. This annual scholarship awards \$750 to a senior New Mexico boy and girl who participated in cross country and/or track & field.

Doc: What is the most demanding part of your job? Proudest part?

Spencer: The most demanding part of this directorship is I hope I get it right every time. I receive enjoyment from knowing it is right every time. I am most proud that our NMTCCA clinic is well respected, and I can ask great people to come and speak. Their acceptance warms my heart.

Doc: What's the one aspect of your job that people don't realize makes you lose sleep some nights?

Spencer: Loss of sleep comes when I have not allowed myself to relinquish the concept, 'what else needs to be done.'

Doc: Who or what influenced you to become clinic director at the NMTCCCA?

Spencer: My reason for doing this directorship is twofold. First, I respect history and those who created this opportunity, the founding members. They are worthy of remembrance and admiration; I endeavor to walk in their ways. Secondly, I honor my father who was a quiet expressive influence. I recall his many directed conversations to me when I was a young person, looking to find my way. His salient words he ended each conversation with me were, "What do you bring to the party?" Over the course of my life when results are in play, I hear his words... they are a guiding light.

Doc: When you accepted the clinic position at the NMTCCA, what were your expectations?

Spencer: My expectations are predicated from our mission: advocate, educate, and celebrate. This is what rings in my actions. If we all would pursue our coaching this way, then success becomes a journey and not a destination. Athletes have access to adults that mentor and demonstrate positive interactions. It is my hope and desire to further this process to our younger coaches. Their accolades spring from the directions of our two associations to highlight and promote our missions and purposes. Our association has fostered the working and positive relationships with NMAA and NMHSCA because of these two efforts and missions. Also, I have included the NMOA to our clinic to help track & field officials learn the updates to the NFHS rules as well as to foster our partnership.

#### Final Thought

Spencer: Together our athletes learn and succeed better when associations are influencing the outcomes. If we show unity of purpose and direction, then our athletes can follow.

Doc: Spencer, thank you for being an important part of the history of track/cross country. Your thoughts will be an inspiration for generations to come "around the course and down the track."

Dr. David "Doc" Helm  
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