

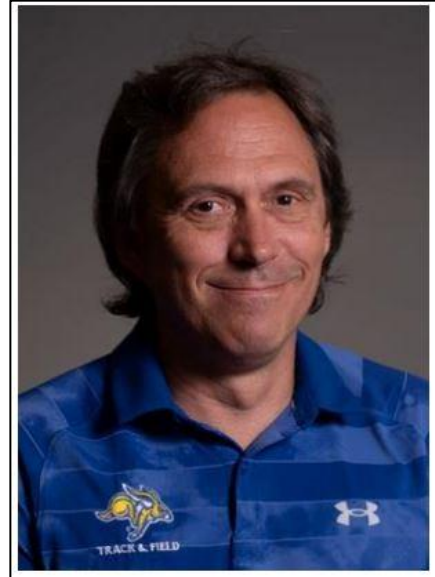
Catching Up With ... Rod DeHaven

Rod DeHaven's career has seemingly checked every box imaginable for a cross country and track and field athlete. A multi-time state champ in high school, Division II national champion in college, U.S. Olympic team member, elite marathoner and successful Division I coach.

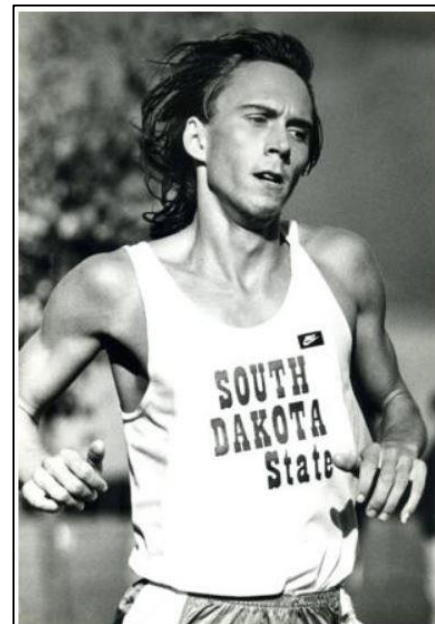
The Huron native got the running bug early in life and has never let up. He started actively running in the fourth grade in a Huron grade school track program. A year later in 1978 he ran the Jackrabbit 15 road race in Brookings. "I don't advise that ten-year olds should run a 15-mile road race. I was pretty sore, but I definitely had the running bug." Some of the inspiration for running came from watching the 1976 Montreal Olympic marathon on TV. "The influence of television and witnessing that Saturday afternoon marathon certainly had an impact on me."

Success would soon follow in high school. He won the 1,600 and 3,200 titles and anchored the winning 3,200 relay squad at the 1983 and '84 state meets. He was named meet MVP both years. His 1984 winning 1,600 time (4:09.8) was an all-time state record and remains fourth on the State's top Ten list. He captured the 1983 state AA cross-country title following an undefeated season.

DeHaven's college career began at the same place he ran that 15-mile road race as a ten-year old – at South Dakota State University in Brookings, after garnering interest from a number of schools including Nebraska and Indiana. "South Dakota State had established themselves as a pretty good program and ultimately kind of a team environment culture and their overall goal was to win a national cross-country championship and that was very alluring, but the big thing was just how well the guys got along, and that was really the deciding factor."



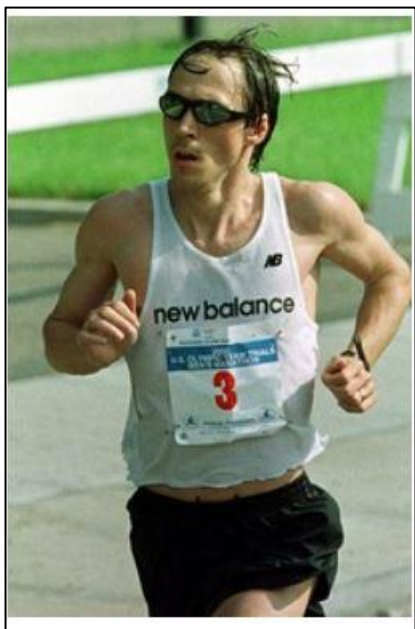
And what a decision it was. His career at SDSU was nothing short of remarkable as he became the most successful distance runner in school history. He won the North Central Conference cross-country title all four years, leading the Jackrabbits to four team titles. He placed in the top ten at the Division II NCAA national meet all four years and led the Jackrabbits to the 1985 Division II title.



On the track, DeHaven established seven school records in the middle-distance events. In 1985 he

won the NCAA DII Indoor 1500 title and was third at the U.S. Junior Championships, earning him a spot on the U.S. National Junior team where he ran the seventh fastest U.S. junior 1500 meters all time (3:42.34). The following year he earned All-American honors finishing eighth in the mile run at the NCAA Indoor Championships. During his collegiate career, he earned 16 All-American honors and won 20 North Central Conference titles.

DeHaven graduated from SDSU in 1989 with a bachelor's degree in computer science. Following graduation he moved to Madison, WI and continued to compete in cross-country, track and road racing, while working as a computer programmer. As a self-coached athlete, he earned a spot on the 1991 U.S. team that competed in the World Cross-Country Championships. Later that year he finished ninth at the USATF championships in the 10,000 meters. He made his marathon debut in 1994, posting a time of 2:14.48 at the Twin Cities Marathon. He would set a 10K PR the following year at the USATF meet, finishing fourth in 28:06.00.



In 1998 he emerged as one of the top Americans on the road, winning the U.S Half Marathon Championship. He represented the U.S. in the marathon at the 1999 World Championships in Seville, Spain, finishing 24th. He won the 2000 U.S. Olympic Trials qualifying him for the Sydney Olympics. He was slowed by illness in Sydney and

finished 69th. But his Olympic experience was much richer than his race placing. "The Opening Ceremony was tremendous, just the awe of 120,000 people and 200-plus countries and walking in with Tommy Lasorda, all that was a big deal, and again, I'm just super fortunate to have been able to experience that."

He came back the following year to finish sixth at the Boston Marathon (2:12.41) and sixth at the Chicago Marathon (2:11.40). All in all, he qualified for four Olympic Trials.

A conversation with then SDSU Head Coach Paul Danger, got DeHaven interested in coaching and in 2004 he found himself back in Brookings as the head track and cross-country coach for the Jackrabbits.

Now entering his 19th year at the helm, his success as an athlete has followed him into the coaching ranks. He led SDSU through the transition from DII to DI and has found great success in the Summit League. His men's cross-country squads have won seven consecutive titles while his women's squad finished 10th at the Midwest Regionals last fall, the highest placing ever for an SDSU squad.

On the track DeHaven's men's squads have won two indoor league titles, and he has been named Summit League Coach of the Year 16 times.

He was inducted into the SD Sports Hall of Fame in 2013 and the SDSU Hall of Fame in 2014.

DeHaven resides in Brookings with his wife Tamila Fraser and he has three grown children, Addison, Graham and Quinn.

Portions of this article were taken from SDSU Sports Information, The SD Sports Hall of Fame and the SDPB In-Play series hosted by Craig Mattick.