

# THE DECATHLON ASSOCIATION

## DECA Newsletter

Volume XXXV

Number 2

January (2), 2010

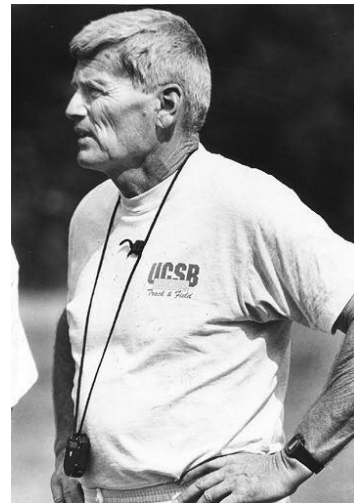
## SAM ADAMS (1931-2010)

### R.I.P.

The phone call came early in the morning. Early morning phone calls often bring bad news. Not that it was ultimately unexpected, but one hoped that it would be put off a while longer. The news....Sam Adams, the head of the USA multi-event community, had died. Sam Adams was an icon. His name is the most respected and revered in the history of American combined events. For a third of a century if a C-E athlete needed a watchful eye on technique, they went to Sam. If they needed a place to train they went to Sam. If they just needed some advice they called Sam. If they needed a qualifying meet or last chance score they went to Sam. He was the first person to trust and the last refuge for the hundreds of combined event athletes for the 40+ years he coached at UCSB and Westmont. He made Santa Barbara an international training center. It was Deca Mecca and Sam, stoic, patient and a character builder, was the father of the American decathlon family.

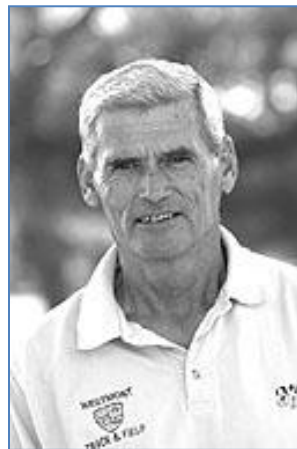
After a competitive decathlon career that saw him place 6th and 5th, respectively, in the 1952 and 1956 Olympic Trials, Adams began a 34-year career at U.C. Santa Barbara. He was head coach for 26 years. Men's Track & Field/Cross Country Head Coach (1964-92). He arrived as an assistant coach at UC Santa Barbara in 1959 and became head track and field and cross country coach in 1964. With the exception of a three-year period,

Sam was the Gauchos' head coach from 1964-92 and could be found, in the 1990s, serving as a volunteer coach at Westmont College in Santa Barbara.



He guided numerous UCSB athletes to the NCAA Championships and All-American status and virtually every UCSB track and field record was set during Adams' tenure. In 1967 and 1968, he guided UCSB to second place finishes in the NCAA College Division Track & Field Championships. In 1982, he was the head coach of the United States National Team and guided the U.S. in meets against the Soviet Union, East Germany, West Germany, and Africa. In 1982, UCSB's Pauley Track hosted the United States-Soviet Union Multi-Event Meet with Adams serving as the event director. Because of Adams' leadership, UCSB was selected to host the 1975 and 1981 National Decathlon Championships. In 1984, Adams served as the manager of both the decathlon and the

heptathlon at the Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles.



The decathletes, pentathletes and heptathletes who trained under Sam's watchful eye reads like an American Who's Who.....you start with Bill Toomey and Jane Frederick, and Russ Hodge.....and, well the list would go on and on. Eight (8!) of his decathletes qualified for the 1984 U.S. Olympic Trials. And nobody ever came away from Sam's guidance unprepared nor uninspired.

Sam was 78 (born July 22, 1931). In his later years he was afflicted with Alzheimer's disease. Many of his athletes conducted a birthday party each July and the affair became an EVENT. He was inducted into the UCSB Athletic Hall of Fame in 2000.

Sam died on January 12, 2010. He was born and grew up in Santa Ynez, CA. A direct descendant of Presidents John and John Quincy Adams, his family had moved from Massachusetts in the early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He is survived by his wife Sue, son John, daughter-in-law Aster and two granddaughters, Kaiya, 4, and Mateya, 2. A daughter (Wendy) is deceased.