

THE DECATHLON ASSOCIATION

DECA Newsletter

Volume XXXXVI

Number 26

June (7), 2021

STEVE GOUGH PASSES

First NCAA Decathlon Champion

Steve Gough
1948-2021



Word has come from his home in Seattle, WA that Steve Gough passed away on May 21st. He was 73. While at Seattle Pacific U'70 Steve was the very first NCAA decathlon champion (1970) and he competed in 32 decathlons between 1969 and 1976, finishing 30. He was nationally ranked for 7 consecutive years and was world ranked in 1975. Even after running a 12 second 1500m PR at the 1972 Olympic Trials, Steve barely lost the 3rd American team spot to an Iowa kid named Jenner. He was 8th at the 1976 Trials. He made three US international teams, was the first American to compete at both Götzis and Talence, and finished with a Top-Ten average of 7777.8 points, then 4th on the US all-time list. His career was highlighted by an 8057 performance at the 1975 USA-USSR-Poland team match. In 1968 he was the NCAA CD triple jump champion.

His son Kyle also competed at Seattle Pacific, eventually scoring 7202 points. Until recently the Goughs held the US father-son record ('85 tables) at 15,150 points.

Three things I'll always remember about Steve:

First, in 1970 he was the first NCAA decathlon champion winning the College Division meet (in St. Paul, MN) a week before Rick Wanamaker won the UD affair at Drake. It was the very first meet I ever announced, having blundered into the infield microphone. And it was there I met his iconic coach, Ken Foreman.

Second, Steve had the biggest feet I've ever seen, size 15s. When he lost his spikes at the 1976 *DecaStar* meet in Talence, organizers could not find shoes big enough, so he competed in flats. Still scored over 7000.

Third, he took one of the most memorable victory laps ever. After scoring 8057 against the Soviets and Poles in a team match in Eugene in 1975, he took a lap with his two-year old son Kyle jogging alongside. It brought the house down at Hayward Field.

Ever faithful to the event, Steve could usually be found at major decathlons in Eugene. He passed away on May 21st. Five days earlier he was playing basketball with his son and grandsons when his heart stopped and CPR was necessary to get him to the hospital. After 5 days in the hospital his heart stopped for good. He leaves his wife Paula of 50 years, four sons, 13 grandkids and hundreds and hundreds of friends. The decathlon family will miss him.

Frank Zarnowski

June 22, 2021