



**USOPC**

SPORT PERFORMANCE

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*Michael Smith leaves the transition area while competing in the Legacy Triathlon-USA Paratriathlon National Championships on July 20, 2019 in Long Beach, California. (Photo by Sean M. Haffey/Getty Images)*

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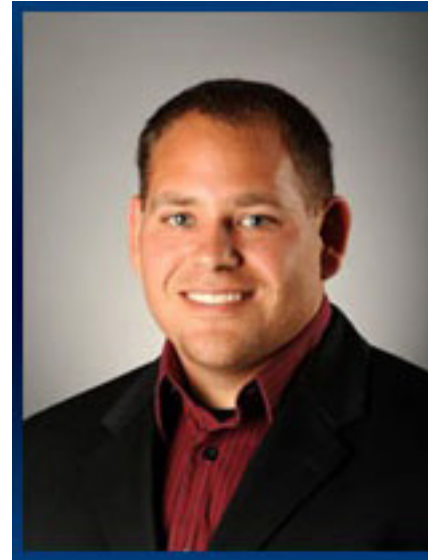
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Message from the  
**Director of Coaching**  
**Chris Snyder**



While sporting competitions may be temporarily paused, we know that coaches are still hard at work adjusting timelines and motivating our next generation of Olympians and Paralympians.

Each year, the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee, in collaboration with the National Governing Bodies of sport, is thrilled to recognize outstanding coaches through its Coach of the Year Program to honor coaches who are doing quality work in the field of coaching on a sport-by-sport and national scale.

Traditionally, the USOPC highlights awards in the categories of Olympic, Paralympic, sport science, volunteer and development coaches of the year. In 2019, the USOPC coaching education department expanded the categories to include coach educator, service provider and collegiate coach in order to recognize additional individuals that are doing quality work in the coaching and education fields and their impact on Team USA athletes.

This edition of *Olympic & Paralympic Coach* is dedicated to the 2019 Coach of the Year winners. These coaches, coach educators and service providers were interviewed for this special edition, and we hope it will not only honor the hard work and collaboration between these coaches and their athletes, but also inspire others to pursue excellence, lead courageously, serve others and foster belonging. Coaches, coach educators and service providers are integral in helping Team USA athletes achieve their dreams, and we're excited to recognize a couple of those individuals in this special edition of *Olympic and Paralympic Coach Magazine*. NGBs and HPMOs will be able to nominate the next round of coaches, coach educators, and service providers later this fall.

Enjoy this issue!

Chris Snyder  
Director, USOPC Coaching Education



## 2019 USOPC Developmental Coach of the Year BethAnn Chamberlain, Nordic Skiing

The developmental category highlights the impact coaches have at the beginning of an athlete's sport journey. It's those early experiences with coaches – learning new skills, feeling supported, and most importantly, having fun – that often influence the desire to stay in sport. The 2019 USOPC Developmental Coach of the Year, BethAnn Chamberlain, is an athlete-turned-coach in the sport of Nordic skiing.

Chamberlain currently works as a development coach for the U.S. Paralympics Nordic Skiing Team, identifying, recruiting and inspiring a new generation of skiers. Collaborating nationwide with partners, ski clubs and hospitals in the 2018-2019 season, she introduced over 250 new skiers to the sport, while also working with several new coaches and guides.

Chamberlain enjoyed a 15-year competitive career in biathlon that took her all around the world. She said her time as an athlete allows her to put herself in her athletes' shoes.

"It takes a lot of time and work to become your best at any sport and there will be bumps along the road. I definitely experienced my fair share as an athlete, and it helps me remember how important it is to support athletes through these moments, and, when possible, help them to see past them," Chamberlain noted. "It's good to remind them that every experience – good or bad – is one they can build off of to help them become their best."

When she finished competing, she channeled the knowledge and experience from her time as an athlete to work for her in her coaching career. Chamberlain explained her love for sharing Nordic skiing and biathlon with others.

"I also really love sport in general and the opportunity it provides for anyone to challenge themselves to become their best self," Chamberlain said. "Working with athletes to do just that is really fun and challenging, and is something I really enjoy."

The USOPC published the *Quality Coaching Framework* which outlines critical areas of importance

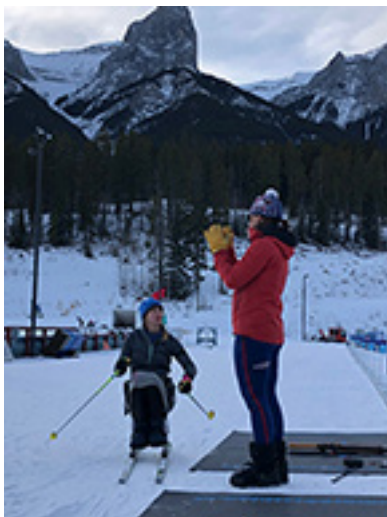
in which coaches should be prepared, including being able to identify values and demonstrate them through coaching.

“My coaching values and goals are to see every athlete as the person they are and find a way to connect with the athlete to support and challenge them to work hard to reach the goals they have.” Chamberlain noted. “I try to look at every situation and the unique pieces that make it up and act from there. I never assume one situation is the same as another.”

Coaching requires interacting, managing, and inspiring to get the best out of people, while also utilizing tailored strategies to the individual athletes. Chamberlain noted the importance of seeing each athlete as a person first, which helps her find a connection with each athlete. She also tries to instill the value of connecting with each other.

“Being on a team is a really special thing, especially in such an individual sport like Nordic skiing. Athletes have this incredible opportunity to have their very own race, perform their best and train for every day. Having a team around you to learn from and support one another is an even greater opportunity,” she continued. “I try to highlight these opportunities to encourage athletes to support one another and learn from each other as they all push themselves to do their best.”

Chamberlain also admits that she has also struggled at times communicating with athletes in a way that they truly connect with. As she continues to develop athletes, she also takes the time to reflect, learn and develop herself.



“There have been many moments since I work with different athletes who all have different personalities and levels of experience. I try to learn from every failure like this and find the best way to communicate going forward.”

In addition to working on individual connections, Chamberlain also highlighted her experiences building confidence within her athletes. Chamberlain does this through helping athletes see opportunity for growth in the successes, but also when things don't go as planned.

“When an athlete is struggling with confidence, I try to help them take a step back and look at the big picture. I remind them to focus on their process, not just the outcome. Low-confidence moments are often good times to check in with ourselves to make sure we are treating ourselves well and making sure self-talk is positive,”

Chamberlain said. “Being a coach, I think it is important to help athletes remember how important positive self-talk is, and to remind them how much they can help themselves by practicing this – even when it doesn't feel right to do so.”

It's no doubt Chamberlain has experienced many successes throughout her tenure. She recalls her best day of coaching was leading a day camp for local youth in Minneapolis, which included a 12-year-old sit skier and a 14-year-old standing skier. The two athletes could not have been more

excited about getting outside, spending all day on their skis and shooting the electronic biathlon rifle. Chamberlain noted the energy, excitement and eagerness to learn and improve was so genuine and incredible to be around.

When asked about a highlight from her coaching career, Chamberlain couldn't pick just one.

"There are a lot of little moments that make up my highlights. Moments on the shooting range when you watch an athlete work through a tough moment...I love seeing the athletes work through their most challenging aspects of the work and training. Getting to support an athlete as they find the best in themselves is always a highlight, and I feel very honored and proud to be a part of it."

Chamberlain puts athletes first and humbly finds joy through the successes of her athletes. Team USA is honored to recognize her as the 2019 USOPC Developmental Coach of the Year.



## 2019 USOPC Volunteer Coach of the Year Dan Greene, US Speedskating

The USOPC realizes that coaches at all level of sport play a critical role in keeping athletes engaged and involved with sports. Volunteer coaches play an important role in an athlete's skill development and can shape their sport experience for many years - all without being compensated for their time. The USOPC is pleased to be able to recognize these coaches through the Volunteer Coach of the Year Award.

As a Marine Corps veteran, Dane Greene lives by the motto "adapt and overcome." The 2019 USOPC Volunteer Coach of the Year has overcome adversity and made his impact in sport.

After suffering a stroke at age 54 in 2018, Greene's resilience, family, and passion for speedskating became the foundation to his road to recovery. Following doctor's orders, the avid speedskater took a break. However, as a sport lover and multi-sport coach, taking a break didn't keep him from the sport he loves – it just guided him in a new direction. Greene worked to become a US Speedskating certified coach, and he obtained his Level 1 and Level 2 coaching certifications within six months of his stroke.

Greene has always loved speedskating, even when he was not winning. Growing up in New York, Greene skated with the Saratoga Winter Club, coached by Pat Maxwell. He started skating at age 11 and lost every speedskating race he entered, but he strived to get better. Through hard work and determination, he won his first medal four years later. With the same resolve, he made the 1988 U.S. National Developmental Team and ranked in the top 15. After long thought, Greene quit three months later when he realized four more years of work was not going to get him to the Olympics. He then joined the Marine Corps.

After years serving as a sergeant, he rediscovered speedskating and competed in masters'

events, winning national titles along the way.

“When you’re training to make a national team, it becomes a job,” Greene said. “You lose the love of the sport. When I got back into it, I loved it all over again. After my stroke I figured, if I can’t skate, at least I can coach.”

By learning essential coaching theory and technical training, Greene also became strategic in his own training and recovery. He became a two-time national champion in the same year, taking first in his age class for both long and short track national championships.

Fast-forward to today, Greene’s vision is to help make the Midwest a central hub for speedskating. He now coaches full time for the Madison Speedskating Club and sees interest in the sport is growing in the area. As Greene works toward his Level 3 coaching certification, he has helped several club skaters compete at regional and national championships.



“Because I still skate, I think I can better relate to our athletes because they see me as a peer and not just a coach,” he said. “We work together to reach a common goal. I coach them whether it’s to get new skills or take it to the next level, whether they want to have fun or work toward an Olympic team. How else do I get the next generation to love this sport as much as I do?”

Greene is honored to be recognized as the 2019 Volunteer Coach of the Year. His commitment and passion for

speedskating has taken his athletes and the club to the next level. By creating tailored roadmaps for success, and donating equipment to help skaters in his club, Greene has gone above and beyond.

“My calling is to help people get the opportunities I had when I was young,” he said. “I am so humbled by this award. It’s great for me and my club, it’s great for US Speedskating, and it’s great for the state of Wisconsin.”



Photo credit: Getty Images

## 2019 USOPC Paralympic Coach of the Year Wesley Johnson, USA Triathlon

The Paralympic Coach of the Year Award considers the impact each national team coach has on athlete performance at the highest level of competition in a Paralympic setting. In 2019, the USOPC honored the work of Wesley Johnson, a USA Triathlon Level II, Youth & Junior and Paratriathlon certified coach.

Johnson leads a squad of elite, junior elite and paratriathlon elite athletes as the founder and head coach of Balanced Art Multisport in Salt Lake City.

“Wesley Johnson is emerging as one of the Paralympic Movement’s most impactful coaches, and USA Triathlon is proud to recognize his achievements,” said Rocky Harris, USA Triathlon CEO. “Successfully coaching paratriathletes requires creativity, innovation and adaptability, paired with the art of recognizing and cultivating athletic potential. That combination is not always easy to find. Wesley embodies those traits, and brings out the best in his athletes as a result.”

“Coach Wes’s coaching style is a wonderful blend of optimism and high-level skill,” said Chris Palmquist, USA Paratriathlon National Team Coach. “He inspires his athletes to exceed their expectations because they trust his knowledge and knows that he cares deeply about each of them. He is humble - always seeking new knowledge - but also generous with sharing what he knows with others. Plus - he always finds a way to smile or laugh!”

Johnson served as an assistant coach for the U.S. team at the 2019 ITU Paratriathlon World Championships in Lausanne, Switzerland. In that role, he guided Kendall Gretsch (Downers Grove, Ill., PTWC), Allysa Seely (Glendale, Ariz., PTS2) and Kelly Elmlinger (San Antonio, Texas, PTS4) to silver medals, and five additional U.S. elite paratriathletes to top-five finishes.

Johnson also coached the U.S. team at the ITU World Paratriathlon Series event in Yokohama, Japan, where American athletes earned three gold medals, two silvers and one bronze. Additionally, he

is the personal coach of Grace Norman (Cedarville, Ohio, PTS5) and Chris Hammer (Salt Lake City, Utah, PTS5), who each ended their seasons ranked No. 3 in the world, and Brad Snyder (Baltimore, Md., PTVI), who finished the season ranked No. 8 in the world in just his second year as an elite paratriathlete.

In an interview with the *Olympic & Paralympic Coach*, Johnson expanded on some areas of his coaching experience, which aligns with the USOPC's Quality Coaching Framework.

**OPC:** How would you describe your leadership style? How has your leadership style evolved throughout your career?

**WJ:** I lead on the values of striving, optimism and respect.

I show respect for others and live in a way that I believe merits their respect of me. I recognize that in all I do, I am being watched. My athletes watch me, the youth I work with watch me, my family watches me. It's the same for elite athletes. They are so much more than just athletes. They are role models. They are watched too, especially by youth and others looking on with aspirations of becoming a better person through sport. As people watch, they learn and repeat behavior. I strive to live in a way that models behavior I want people around me to learn and repeat. I cultivate relationships in such a way that my entire community has a common interest in being respectful of others and living worthy of their respect.

I live by a high level of optimism and faith. I look past several human characteristics that would have us focus on the negative, and I look for the good because I believe we can improve and change. I'm grateful for the negative experiences I have had over the years. Personally, I have grown tremendously by finding my way through trials, which I did largely by looking for the good in them. And with athletes, working through negative experiences together has taught me more than I could learn from positive experiences alone or simply from listening to other people share their experiences.

And that's why we do this: to become better people and better at doing hard things. I'm constantly reminding my athletes and painting the "big picture" mindset that success doesn't happen in a day. Once the team and each individual is bought into that approach, the team dynamics and environment improves. While I have confidence in how far this has brought my squad so far, I know it is always evolving and something I have to stay on top of every single day. A high-level of presence with each athlete on my squad and each person in my community is required to make sure we are progressing on all cylinders and that the growth mindset remains intact. So while I NEVER waver on my values, continued leadership requires my trust, presence, accountability and consistency.

**OPC:** How do you create a psychologically safe environment for your athletes? How do you help your athletes embrace vulnerability and failure? How do you help your athletes move through hard times?

**WJ:** Our team environment and coach-athlete relationship is based on respect, trust, open communication and me taking shared responsibility in my athletes' outcomes.

When one of my athletes doesn't reach their full potential in their A race, they are disappointed and have every right to be. And I don't put it on them. It is very overwhelming when the athlete feels and

takes on 100% of that responsibility, and it is surprising to me how often that happens in sport. When they feel alone, they won't feel safe and then they won't communicate. So I step in and accept a big part of that responsibility as well. The reality is, I often take their failures and letdowns just as hard as they do. I end up in a lot of thought, analyzing, having discussions with the athlete, consulting with experts I confide in, and even praying to help me determine what went wrong and what we will do different the following season so we can turn the challenge or perceived failure into a positive situation. I let my athletes know I'm doing all of that for them, and I include them. In this process, they can start to see and feel their results aren't 100% on them. They remember they have a team and staff who cares about them and they feel they are not alone in the process of improvement. We win as a team and we lose as a team. Reconnecting with the sense of team helps their ability to embrace failure and then feel safe to express concerns with an open level of communication. Over time, it is ongoing collaboration that builds a high level of trust.

**OPC:** What failure have you had as a coach that you turned into a learning opportunity?

**WJ:** In March 2017, I experienced a life-threatening bike accident, which resulted in a major concussion. When I thought my recovery was on track, I got in a second accident and, in the months that followed, slipped into bouts of depression. It took more than a year for me to recover, both in all ways physically and to regain my sense of self and confidence.

Looking back at that experience and what I learned, I can now say it was one of the best things that ever happened to me. For a while I couldn't remain present with myself, others, or even the task at hand. Since I have always been someone who takes too much on at once, this period of life really exposed that weakness and how much I was holding myself back by saying yes to too many things. It got so bad that I went through a period where I didn't know if I wanted to be a coach anymore. I felt I couldn't do my job at the standard I expected of myself, and I started losing the love and passion for it all.

To fully recover from the accident and concussion, I had to determine why I coach and what my priorities are. I landed on my family and coaching athletes. In choosing those two things, I then had to let go of many other things I was holding onto, such as my desires for having a certain skill or ability that was out of my control. Once I accepted my situation, who I am and what I value, I could then take life and my accident as a growth and learning opportunity. From the moment of that choice and on, everything started to improve and progress.

**OPC:** How do you define success? For yourself? For your athletes?

**WJ:** For my high performance athletes, the end goal is always to win. However, winning is the result of having progressed more than the rest of the field, so progress is the marker of success, not winning. Someone who wins today and isn't progressing will lose tomorrow.

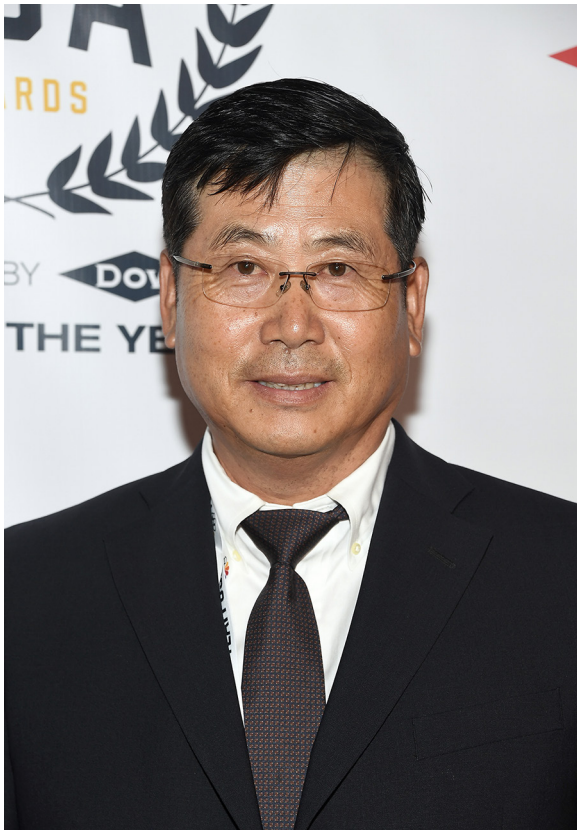
Progression comes from setting process-oriented goals and doing the work prescribed by those processes. We gauge progress through assessments that measure where an athlete is now and, when repeated, whether they have progressed, regressed, or stayed the same. Progress is success. But even when the outcome is static or a regression, I teach my athletes that failure in the assessment isn't a bad thing so long as they find an opportunity to learn and grow. When my athletes look at outcomes this way and then adjust based on what they've learned, they keep progressing. So success

is progressing, which is dependent on doing process-oriented work and looking at all training, racing and outcomes with a positive, learning mindset.

No matter where in their career an athlete is when I finish with them, I want to make sure that my overall influence has been positive. My success is whether I help them learn valuable skills that they can use to navigate this life and help others, including their own family, in the future. As we face the ups and downs of sport together, ultimate success is creating healthy relationships that last a lifetime and leave my athletes with the ability to also meet the ups and downs of life with strength and confidence.



*Photo credit: Getty Images*



*Photo credit: Getty Images*

## **2019 USOPC Olympic Coach of the Year Kisik Lee, USA Archery**

The Olympic Coach of the Year Award considers the impact each national team coach has on athlete performance at the highest level of competition in an Olympic setting. In 2019, the USOPC honored Kisik Lee of USA Archery.

Coach Kisik Lee is the national head coach for USA Archery's Olympic program that is based out of Chula Vista, California and coach of Brady Ellison, who won the 2019 world championships. Ellison is the first U.S. Olympic-style archer to win the world championships since 1985. Ellison also won the 2019 world cup final and is ranked number 1 in the world. Ellison earned two golds (stages 1 and 3) and a bronze medal (stage 2) at world cup events in 2019.

Coach Lee has been with USA Archery since 2006. In that time, the U.S. has won three Olympic medals, including silver medals in the team competition in 2012 and 2016 and an individual bronze by Brady Ellison in 2016.

Coach Lee's background is in biomechanics. He created the National Training System (NTS) which is the official method of shooting technique that coaches are required to learn in order to be certified by USA Archery. The NTS is based on analysis of body control, muscular requirements, and mental concentration needed to execute strong shots under pressure situations.

Coach Lee is originally from South Korea, where he was the head coach from 1981 to 1997. During that time, South Korea won a combined total of eight gold medals at the 1984, 1988, 1992 and 1996 Olympics. In 1997 he became the national head coach of Australia where he coached 2000 Olympic gold medalist Simon Fairweather and 2004 Olympic bronze medalist Tim Cuddihy.

Lee was kind enough to answer questions about his coaching experience as an elite international archery coach.

**OPC:** What was your best day of coaching this past season and why?

**KL:** Brady winning the World Championships was definitely one of the best days coaching this past year. It had been since 1995 since I coached someone to win the individual world title and that was while coaching in South Korea. That was a very meaningful and big thing for me.

**OPC:** How has your experience as an athlete helped or hindered you as a coach?

**KL:** I wore their shoes, so I know what they are feeling when they are learning. Experience as an archer is a great help, especially in understanding a competition mindset. It's important to know what your mind goes through when you're under pressure. As far as athlete experience that has hindered my coaching, I think my experience with target panic made me sensitive to that issue. I think that is why I want to emphasize more mental training. So maybe that makes me too intense in certain beliefs and restricts other shooting styles.

**OPC:** What is one of your most effective/innovative teaching strategies? How do you know your athletes had a good practice?

**KL:** Scientific feedback and knowing the National Training System that we are teaching. I know my athletes have had a good practice because I see it and feel it. They are positive, they hunger for more and keep pushing. They come with the right focus and right attitude every single session.

**OPC:** How do you prepare yourself mentally for competitions?

**KL:** I prepare by rehearsing the situations the athletes or I may encounter in training and in my mind. For the competition environment, you have to be prepared for anything and everything. This is the only way we can minimize the risk of failure before a major tournament. Training has to simulate the competition environment, which means anything can happen in training.

**OPC:** How would you describe your leadership style? How has your leadership style evolved throughout your career?

**KL:** In the beginning I had an authoritative, dominant, and direct style. I've changed a lot through the years, and now I'm trying to understand the athletes from their positions and I'm trying to lead athletes differently. I just want them to know we are a team and I want to set the priority for them that we are not separate, but moving together as a team for the same goal.

**OPC:** How do you create a psychologically safe environment for your athletes?

**KL:** Especially for a high performance program environment, we have a lot of necessary USOPC partners around such as sports psychology, nutrition, sports medicine, and strength and conditioning. Together we are a team and we focus on how to keep the environment psychologically safe for our athletes.

Photo credit: Getty Images



**OPC:** Why do you coach? How do you coach so that you are in alignment with your values and strengths?

**KL:** I value experience, because through experience you can learn more. I coach because I want to help. I want to help athletes to be in their best positions to be successful.

**OPC:** How do you go about learning / continuously improving?

**KL:** I just try to get more case studies and communicate with a panel of coaches sharing trial and error. I think there is a lot to learn from mistakes. There is always room to improve and grow regardless of our level.

**OPC:** What is your favorite skill to teach your athletes?

**KL:** Mental game/software. This is the biggest thing. If you don't have clear software, you can't guarantee repeating a successful performance under pressure. I strive to teach the perfect mental software.

**OPC:** How do you build athlete confidence?

**KL:** Planning and execution of the program and plan. We have to do this together.

**OPC:** How do you use your sport as a platform to build character in your athletes?

**KL:** I think archery as a sport is about being honest and having integrity. Not only coaches, but athletes can build their character as a human being through archery as it is a martial arts sport. They cannot blame the equipment or their competitor.

**OPC:** How do you recover from high stress situations/times?

**KL:** For me, family is important. I love playing with my grandkids and that helps me get rid of any high stress. Spending time with family is key.



## 2019 USOPC Coach Developer of the Year Ken Martel, USA Hockey

In 2019, the USOPC established the Coach Developer of the Year Award, which recognizes the work being done by NGB and HPMO coach education staff in training and developing Team USA coaches.

USA Hockey created the American Development Model (ADM) and shared the program and branding with the USOPC in order to support the Olympic and Paralympic family of National Governing Bodies. Through USA Hockey's leadership and the strong collaboration with the USOPC and some partner NGBs, over 24 NGBs have ADM programming and 50 have endorsed the concept. Ken Martel is empowered to spread ADM concepts with other coaches and organizations, and has consulted over ten of the NGBs and has been the leader to create the opportunity for the USOPC to grow ADM across all Olympic and Paralympic sports. Martel's willingness to influence sports such as lacrosse, football, speedskating, tennis and others is helping grow ADM and benefiting sport in America. In 2019, USA Hockey had the largest number of American-born, ADM-trained players selected in the first round of the NHL draft - showing the connection between both membership growth and performance outcomes to build better athletes within the same system. USA Hockey has invested in ADM from grassroots to podium development, and Martel has lead collaborations with the USOPC, NGBs and tutored other sports organizations on the concepts. His efforts have changed sport in America for the better.

The USOPC was honored to name Ken Martel the 2019 USOPC Coach Developer of the Year. Martel spent 18 years as a professional coach, and for the past 13 years he has pivoted to a coach developer role. Martel works in both the ADM and Coach Developer spaces, ensuring that both areas align with best practices to effectively train the USA Hockey coaching population.

Martel joined the *Olympic & Paralympic Coach* for an interview on his coaching experiences and tactics.

**OPC:** How do you describe your leadership style?

**KM:** I would say that I tend to be more positive and try to be positive no matter what. We all have our frustrations as coaches when we don't always see the results we want. But then take a step back and say, 'Okay. It's not about me, it's about the players,'... I think my leadership style has certainly changed over the years. We all evolve for sure the longer you've been in the game.

**OPC:** How do you define success?

**KM:** I think for most coaches, we're in it because we want to help people. We want our athletes to be better. We want them, both coaches and players really, to feel like they're improving and accomplishing whatever their goals are. Most coaches get great satisfaction in seeing their athletes succeed. Better coaches have an impact on both player performance and player retention. This has huge impacts on the culture in our sport, the longevity and growth of our sport, as well as what people normally associate with coaching and that is the talent and performance. We take a lot of pride in helping our coaches be better. We feel like we're making a difference. A lot of what we're doing is cultural changes from an athlete development perspective and cultural changes in how our coaches work and deliver the sport.

**OPC:** How do you build confidence in those you are teaching?

**KM:** Athletes gain confidence from knowing they are prepared, and that falls back on us as coaches and how do we best prepare them...Confidence is something that they gain internally from the environment that we create. Coaches have to understand that every failure isn't necessarily a lack of effort. If they're meeting the right expectations that they've set for themselves then they should be able to gain confidence over time if we're reinforcing the right things and helping them along the way. We can't just magically give them confidence, it's something that they gain over time from doing and seeing those successes. So it's more of how do we set up coaches and athletes to do that.

**OPC:** How do you infuse reflection into your coaching practice?

**KM:** That's been an evolution with us. A lot of coaches, including myself, we tend to reflect a lot on our players, but we don't necessarily always reflect on ourselves and how we're delivering our message as coaches. We tend to think a lot about the athlete, and I think over time the evolution has been trending toward much more reflection internally on how we're doing as coaches and helping other coaches from a coaching development standpoint. We want them to start thinking about the processes that they're using to coach, and we're encouraging them to take a step back and reflect on what they did well as a coach and also find the things that they could improve on. I think that's really impactful.

**OPC:** How do you connect with your coaches and how do you help them relate to each other?

**KM:** Coaching is all about relationships... A lot of times, we think it's more about what we're coaching, the sport itself, and the longer you're in it and the more you do, you realize it's more about the relationships. If you have good relationships, good things happen and you see more success. If you don't have good relationships, it doesn't really matter how good you are with the tactical ele-

ment of coaching.

**OPC:** How do you holistically develop your coaches?

**KM:** It's hard to nail down any one thing, but for me it always comes back to how you are treating your people. How do you make them feel? Do they feel empowered to go out and try things? The environment that we as coaches create is the most important thing that we do, because we either set them up for success or failure... I'm around several other people within USA Hockey that I get to work with that I think have similar values, which is extremely helpful because we have shared beliefs on what we think is important.

**OPC:** How do you adjust your coaching style when educating other coaches?

**KM:** Coming in with the idea that we don't always have all the answers and letting them, just like our athletes, solve problems is something we like to do from a coach developer in a coaching education role. It comes back to us just asking coaches the right questions so that they can go through the process of figuring some things out for themselves. With coaches, and how we're working with them, it's really just trying to find the right questions to ask them so that they can go through that process and come to their own conclusions. A lot of coaches and even our athletes don't always see the forest because of the trees and it's having some outside perspective to help see those things more clearly. That's been the biggest change in how I've tried to evolve over time working with both coaches and athletes.

**OPC:** What is one of the highlights of your coaching career?

**KM:** I have two that stand out from a coaching standpoint. Both were while I was working here at USA Hockey. It was when I served on coaching staffs that won the first-ever under-18 world championship for the United States and the first-ever under-20 world championship...Both were barriers for our country. I can tell you I had some really great colleagues that I got to work with on those experiences, but more importantly we had great players...real selfless players that were part of our group.



## **2019 USOPC Service Provider of the Year Paul Robbins, US Tennis Association**

Starting in 2019, the USOPC began formally recognizing the importance of the service provider role in supporting Team USA athletes through the Coach of the Year Program. As a member of the Team Behind the Team, service providers offer an added dimension of support in the area sport science that directly impacts athlete health, well-being and performance.

Beginning in 1999, while coaching at Athletes' Performance (now EXOS), Paul Robbins began examining training loads and energy systems with the athletes at the training center. Through AP, he began working with European soccer and was introduced to in-game tracking systems, which monitors the players' demands through real game data. Using this data, he could enhance his Energy System Development (ESD) programs and load management protocols.

Robbins played an instrumental role in implementing and validating the fatigue index as part of the United States Tennis Association's larger collaboration with IBM. He has educated coaches and provided guidance how they should be adjusting athletes' practice schedules and recovery based on this fatigue index. Additionally, he is assisting USTA in selecting wearable technology providers and continues to guide best-in-class athlete management systems as the USTA explores new platforms. "I found that many coaches were focusing on endurance athletes and there was a need within team sports and tennis," said Robbins "Understanding how to manage players' loads by developing and strengthening the right energy systems has been my greatest contribution to the field."

In 2010, Robbins began working with STATS LLC to bring the performance technology of tracking to the NBA. During his seven years with STATS, they went from four teams to the entire league, monitoring every player during every quarter second of each game. Collecting this data helped him understand the demands of the players. After the NBA switched to a new tracking system in 2017, Robbins had to learn how to create his own metrics for training from any tracking system. As a member of the USTA Sport Science Committee, he felt it was time to bring performance tracking to tennis.

Since 2017, Robbins has been working with the USTA on developing a system to track tennis players, starting with Hawkeye data in matches and Kinexon for practices, which tracks the movement of the player, not just the ball. Over the past 10 years, he has expanded to using this player tracking technology with ESD in the NBA, USTA, college basketball and the NFL.

“When we have been working on a specific improvement or drill with a player and we see that change in a game, the reaction of that player is well worth the time and energy it takes to track and evaluate every detail on court.”

Robbins was honored the inaugural 2019 Service Provider of the Year. Below are some of Robbins' thoughts about his impact on athletes and performance.

**OPC:** What is one of the highlights of your career? What is one of your proudest moments?

**PR:** When an athlete or intern I worked with reaches the top of their profession, I am so proud to watch them win a championship, whether as a player or coach. One of my proudest moments was when a past athlete sent me a photo of himself holding the World Series trophy. He was a hardworking athlete that had a lot of bad breaks in his career, but he stayed with it and became a coach. He finally got the chance to coach at the highest level and help his team win the World Series.

**OPC:** Who is your mentor/hero? How have they influenced you to be the coach you are today?

**PR:** My mentor was my dad, Stan Robbins. He instilled in me the work ethic I have today as well as how to work with and relate to all types of people. In coaching, you need to understand the athlete as a person first, and then as an athlete.

**OPC:** How do you go about learning / continuously improving? What resource do you recommend most to other coaches? (Book, podcast, person, etc.)

**PR:** My job is to talk to strength coaches in the USTA, NBA and NFL on a daily basis, and I learn by listening and watching them. Being hands-on and involved with different coaches and being open to the different styles is the best way to learn. This is a small industry, so getting to know other coaches and learning from them is key.

**OPC:** What failure have you had as a coach that you turned into a learning opportunity?

**PR:** My very first coaching job was head JV football coach in Vermont in 1986. We went 1-7 that season because I just wasn't prepared. I had just finished playing college football and thought I knew how to coach because I knew the sport. I understood quickly that coaching was much more than X's and O's. I had to see the whole picture and get the players working together, not just run plays. After understanding my weaknesses as well as how to get the right help from my assistant coaches, we went undefeated the following season.

**OPC:** How do you build athlete confidence? What strategies do you use for when an athlete is struggling / their confidence is low?

**PR:** I build confidence by showing them their successes in each drill, explaining to them what they did well so they understand what I am looking for out of them –while giving suggestions on how they can improve. I always say that you never make a mistake if you push through and give max effort. Every drill you are learning how to adjust. Mistakes are when you give up on a ball.

**OPC:** How do you know you are doing a good job helping athletes progress as a coach?

**PR:** In my work, looking at data and creating energy systems, I am mainly focused on how to improve on an athlete's weakness. Understanding the energy systems they need and adjusting training to meet those needs is important. Using this as a base, you can progress to the level the athlete needs. I am constantly testing new technology to monitor loads, accelerations, speed and recovery of the player during practice and off court training.



## 2019 USOPC Collegiate Coach of the Year Karen Shelton, Field Hockey

In the early 1980s, legendary basketball coach Dean Smith set a tone that resonated throughout the athletic department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His philosophy wasn't complex and didn't require critical thinking. It was simply for coaches to do what is right. They should take no pride for doing it, but because it is the right thing to do.

At the same time, a young Karen Shelton who just arrived on campus as the head field hockey coach took quick notice of this atmosphere. Smith's expectations of the program have been instilled with her nearly four decades later. She has used that same philosophy to become one of the winningest coaches in National Collegiate Athletic Association history backed by eight national championships and countless hours of guiding student-athletes and getting them to play to the best of their abilities. This includes several Tar Heels that have gone on to represent Team USA on the Olympic stage and international competitions.

When you put this in perspective, it's no wonder Shelton has accomplished all she has at UNC, let alone having her home stadium named in her honor. As the 2019 USOPC College Coach of the Year, Shelton put together one of the best seasons in the program's history this past year: a perfect 23-0 for the second straight season capped off by hoisting another national championship trophy.

With such an accomplished career, it's almost impossible to pick one moment above all others.

"All of the championships are special, and I've had so many special teams," said Shelton. "If I had to pick just one moment, I'd say that having our facility dedicated in my name was so emotional and almost surreal. I love representing the University of North Carolina and I love coming to work every day."

The 2019 USOPC College Coach of the Year follows back-to-back campaigns that saw the Tar Heels named National Field Hockey Coaches Association National Coaching Staff of the Year, in addition to Shelton being named Atlantic Coast Conference Coach of the Year in 2018, the 10th of her career. In total, she has guided UNC to 37 winning seasons, 22 ACC championships and Final Four appearances in twelve of the last thirteen seasons. Through it all, her definition of success is simple.

“We are in the education business,” continued Shelton. “When working at a university you recruit young women to come in when they are at a transformational time in their lives. To have them come in and to grow in so many different ways – academically, athletically, socially, emotionally, physically – it’s all about getting better and working on their personal growth. I take real pride in developing a holistic approach to our coaching and to have young women develop consistently in those areas.”

An Olympian herself, Shelton knows what it takes to get the job done, from staying progressive with the game to utilizing the latest technology and trends. To her, not looking for the latest trend is the same as stepping backward. One of the team’s most innovative changes over the past few years is working with an on-campus sport psychologist, Dr. Jeni Shannon, whom Shelton credits in fostering more open communication within the locker room.

“We hold each other accountable in a good, comfortable and easy way,” said Shelton. “Sometimes you have hard conversations but for the most part, it’s this open communication Dr. Shannon has helped our team develop. I think that has been critical to our recent successes.”

As a leader, Shelton admits to being very hands on in terms of demonstrations, as student-athletes should see it visually but also follow through themselves. That is especially true in the offseason, but above all, it’s the time to fine-tune one’s game, make mistakes and cultivate confidence.

“I can’t bestow it,” commented Shelton. “I think confidence is earned, and it’s earned by repeatedly performing and repeatedly performing under pressure. You can wrap your arm around a kid and say, ‘keep your head up’ or ‘it’s okay to make mistakes,’ but I have always felt I can’t do it for them.”

She’s also become more collaborative as a leader, transitioning from a more authoritative style to one of working with feedback from the team and collaboration with the coaching staff. Everyone brings something to the table while confidence surges. This includes Grant Fulton, her long-time associate head coach, newcomer assistant coach Robbert Schenk who has brought a fresh offensive perspective, and performance analyst Chris Fry.

“For the longest time I was the coach and there were part-time assistants, so it was more difficult to have a consistent coaching staff,” said Shelton. “I think bringing really good and passionate people together and then having the confidence to let them work, and to not be the one that has to do it all, I think is really important.”

Shelton has built one of the most successful programs in Division I sports, but like any major accomplishment, it didn’t happen overnight, nor is it absent of heartbreak. Despite having the second highest championship count in NCAA history, there’s been ample time to learn from big losses. When people note the amount of times UNC has stood atop the college field hockey world, Shelton is first to point out her Tar Heels squads have lost the finals eleven times. While heartbreaking, they have been some of the biggest lessons for her, the coaching staff and student-athletes year after year. This, combined with more open communication, has attributed greatly as to why the Tar Heels have remained undefeated since a loss to the University of Connecticut in the 2017 NCAA semifinals.

“The last two [seasons] have been the result of failures,” said Shelton. “Again, I try to keep it in per-

spective. When you get to the Final Four that's a good year, but it is hard to lose in the final and it is hard to have gone such a long streak without winning. You can't dwell on it, you have to pick yourself up, dust yourself off and get back to the drawing board."

She carries the losses close to her heart but also sees the big picture from multiple perspectives, such as battling in the championship game 19 out of 39 years with UNC.



Over the seasons, Shelton's philosophy has evolved to one where she feels the coaching staff's job is done during the week, from the weight room to practice, team meetings and video review, anything to get the players ready the next time they walk to the pitch. Once the whistle blows on game day, that responsibility is handed over to the roster, something that goes beyond putting points on the scoreboard.

"We want them to take ownership of the game," continued Shelton. "We trust them that if they see something, they can make a call in the game. I've always felt that it is their game. They are the ones making the split-second decisions, so we want them to feel confident and empowered to make the calls when necessary."

In turn, trust has grown immensely in the UNC locker room, again contributing immensely to communication. Aside from watching student-athletes progress through training, the coaching staff sees development off the field by keeping an open door policy and constantly speaking to team leaders.

"Getting good, honest feedback is something you have to do," said Shelton. We have meetings twice a year with the players and an open door policy. We always ask, 'what do you like, not like, what can we do better' – twice a year they have opportunity to give feedback, plus a daily basis."

To wear the Carolina Blue means no shortcuts, no fast track to elite status or to feel privileged. It means being committed to what Shelton believes can be achieved within the program, to practicing the fundamentals and being a family member even after the season ends. It also means working on strengths and improving weaknesses.

“A lot of kids have a good backhand and all they want to do is work on that or go to the backhand,” said Shelton. “You want to work on areas that could use improvement, but you can’t neglect what is good. It’s just a balance of recognizing what’s called for in the situation whether it’s an individual skill or team tactic.”

While devoting so much time to eager student-athletes, it’s also important to care for one’s self. Self-care for Shelton means staying active, as it helps instill in her players that they will be athletes their entire lives, not just the four years they spend at UNC. It also means taking advantage of down time in order to have a long-lasting career.

“I’ve always been a runner and maintained a level of fitness,” said Shelton. “Currently, I’m doing Orange Theory three to four times a week, which I really enjoy and feel has added years to my coaching career. I feel like I’m in really good shape, happy and healthy. I don’t feel like I’m tired of coaching.

“Physical fitness is something I take pride in and makes me feel good after a workout first and foremost. I also love to play golf. When we were dating, my husband taught me how to play, and we have been playing together ever since. I think it’s an important part of my life that I can get away to the golf course – it’s beautiful, it’s outdoor and its surreal in terms of execution of skill. I’m also a gardener – I enjoy getting out in the yard, and I love to read.”

While the United States will not be participating in field hockey at the Olympic Games set for 2021 in Tokyo, Shelton will still be watching with high anticipation. To her, it’s for the love of the game, reminiscent to her days on the U.S. Women’s National Team and her bronze medal from the Olympic Games Los Angeles 1984.

“As a coach at the collegiate level, competing internationally is the next level and the absolute pinnacle,” said Shelton. “I love that we have that goal, that carrot out there beyond playing for an NCAA championship. I’m extremely proud that so many of our players have been able to progress past college play to compete internationally, which is the ultimate honor in amateur athletics.”





## 2019 USOPC Doc Councilman Science Award Andrew Stuart, US Speedskating

The Doc Councilman Award is named after James Edward “Doc” Councilman who is known as one of the greatest swimming coaches of all time, pioneering innovative ways to increase performance through science and technology. The award recognizes the impact science and innovation have on athlete performance and coaching.

*“Winning this award reassures me that I’m doing a job that I’m meant to do, that I’m living up to my passion and my purpose. I’m helping athletes and sticking to my core beliefs and values in this profession.” –Andrew Stuart*

Four years ago, Andrew Stuart was visiting his friend and mentor, Chris Moore, a powerlifter and founder of the popular podcast Barbell Shrugged. The two were working out at Moore’s home in California when he asked Stuart what he was doing to develop himself.

The question made Stuart take a step back. He knew all the techniques and had all the knowledge, but was he still growing as a coach? The conversation resonated even more when two weeks later, Moore had a heart attack and died at the age of 36.

“Those words were strong,” Stuart said. “It made me ask myself if I was following my purpose, my passion and my belief.”

Part of that purpose was instilled in him as a 13-year-old boy who wanted to power-up for a football career. His father worked at the University of Mississippi, and Stuart learned strength conditioning

from several of his dad's student-workers. Years later, after he'd completed a degree at Ole Miss and played four years of football, Stuart had an identity crisis once he took off the uniform. He asked himself, what do I do now?

Stuart had a variety of job opportunities, including an internship with the Ole Miss strength and conditioning staff, teaching at the University of Memphis, a year as an eighth grade history teacher, a strength coach at Barksdale Air Force Base, and a competitive weightlifter at Louisiana State University Shreveport. He also continued his own education, earning a master's degree in kinesiology at Georgia Southern University.

After a stint at the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, California, Stuart worked with athletes at the University of New Mexico while he worked on his doctoral degree in exercise science. His experience at the OTC and UNM allowed him to train athletes from different sport backgrounds, including rowing, rugby, tennis, cheer, BMX, track and field, and cross country.

It was just about two years ago that Stuart started with US Speedskating. His incorporation of the Dynamic Strength Index has helped both long and short track athletes develop the physical strength necessary to compete at world-class levels.

"I'm just here to help them," he said. "If athletes get medals, that's their success; it's not mine. I help them endure what they put their bodies through, and maybe they give that one percent more that they need to win."

Part of his program includes assessing athletes' performances every few weeks, talking with coaches to see where an athlete might need some help and getting feedback from skaters to see how they're feeling.

"I take that information and individualize a program for each athlete that is adaptable as they train," he said. "I reassess the program to make sure they're accomplishing goals and seeing their results on the ice. If performance isn't getting better, then we need to go back to the drawing board."

As part of the USS high-performance team, Stuart works closely with medical trainers, nutritionists and the USS Sports Science Director Shane Domer to create a complete plan for training, performance and recovery.

"Andrew Stuart has been a great addition to the USS High Performance Staff," Domer said. "During his time with USS, Andrew has built a great rapport with our athletes and is constantly evolving his training philosophy to better individualize his training programs. Andrew has recently implemented a DSI assessment to optimize our athletes' Rate of Force Development capabilities. Since RFD is such an important part of speedskating, we feel that this assessment is having a positive impact on our athletes' performance."

Stuart lives in Salt Lake City with his wife, Dorothy, and their 2-year-old son, Thomas. His advice to future strength and conditioning coaches is to work with as many different sports and athletes as possible, get a master's degree, volunteer and work internships.

“We have a lot of young athletes at USS,” Stuart said. “I could very well be the only strength coach they have for their entire career. I could have a significant impact on them for the rest of their lives. It’s my job to build them up and be a mentor. It’s very humbling.”



Cover image by: Kenzie Coning

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