

Dean Hayes (Middle Tennessee State 1965-2022)

Dean Hayes gained great respect since coming to Middle Tennessee in 1965. The legendary coach passed away on Jan. 7, 2022 after 57 years at the helm. Overall, Hayes guided the programs to 29 OVC titles, 19 Sun Belt championships, and 21 NCAA Top 25 finishes. Fifty-two of his student-athletes have earned a total of 125 All-America honors, five have become national champions six times and a number of them have gone on to compete internationally in the Olympic Games, World University Games, World Championships, Goodwill Games, Pan-American Games and African Championships.

In Conference USA, Hayes claimed 11 titles, six with the women and five with the men's team. Most recently, sweeping the 2021 men's and women's cross country championships.

His men's teams dominated the Ohio Valley Conference, and the women's teams duplicated that success after Hayes took over the program in 1987. Both squads continued their success in the Sun Belt Conference, capturing 19 of the 51 indoor and outdoor titles for which they were eligible to win.

Hayes added four Conference USA Coach of the Year accolades, 15 Sun Belt Coach of the Year awards to complement his 16 OVC Coach of the Year honors, which included 10 in a row from 1977 to 1986. He was inducted into the Blue Raider Hall of Fame in 1982 and the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 1994. In addition, Hayes became a member of the Illinois Sports Hall of Fame in 1993, the Mason-Dixon Athletic Club Hall of Fame in March 2005, the USTFCCCA Hall of Fame in 2008, the Lake Forest College Hall of Fame in 2009 and the Naperville Hall of Fame in 2019.

Following the 1981 season, the Division I Track & Field Coaches Association voted Hayes the NCAA Outdoor Coach of the Year. Hayes then served as president of the TFCA in 1982-83.

He also coached numerous international teams whether sponsored by the United States Olympic Committee, USA Track & Field or an international federation. His international experience began at the first Olympic Sports Festival in Colorado Springs, Colo., in 1978. Since then, he coached numerous international teams including: World University Games in Kobe, Japan (1985); Goodwill Games in Seattle (1990); World Cup in London (1994); World Championships in Athens, Greece (1997); the Goodwill Games in New York (1998) and the Ghanaian International team at the Senior Championships in Durban, South Africa (2016).

The Naperville, Ill., native also served as an assistant at several international events. Aside from the first Olympic Sports Festival, Hayes worked as an assistant at the World University Games in Bucharest, Romania (1981); the World Championships in Helsinki (1983) and was a

Coach for the Summer Olympic Games in Seoul, South Korea (1988). He also acted as a referee at the Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta (1996).

Hayes earned his B.A. at Lake Forest College (Ill.), where he competed in the 800-meters, the long jump and the triple jump, the latter an event in which he was an NCAA qualifier.

After earning his M.S. Ed. at Northern Illinois, Hayes began his coaching career at the high school level in Chicago where he coached for three years followed by one year in Minneapolis. He then jumped to the collegiate ranks at his alma mater, Lake Forest.