



# **USA Track & Field** **CLUB COUNCIL**

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

**DEVON JOAN MARTIN, CHAIR**

**CHUCK SCHNEEKLOTH, VICE-CHAIR**

**BILL ROE, SECRETARY**

**WILL LINDGREN, AT-LARGE REP**

*The mission of the Club Council is to enhance and expand opportunities for USATF open level, club-based team competition in track & field, cross country, long distance running, and race walking. The Club Council seeks to do this by promoting the club system of elite athlete development fostered by the creation of Association-based Elite Development Clubs in every major metropolitan area of the United States. The Council is an advocate and information resource for creating new clubs and improving existing ones and acts to create, select, and oversee events to serve as USATF National Club Championships in every discipline of our sport. The USATF Club Council strives to take a leadership role in popularizing the post-collegiate, open level of our sport by promoting club-oriented events that present entertaining, fast-paced competition that will attract spectators, media coverage and sponsors.*

## **Chair's Report** **Overview of Elite Development Club Program ("EDC")**

As I step down after many years, what I am most proud of where the EDC programs started and where it has gone. Founded by Bill Roe, the program began with a handful of emerging elite athletes who struggled even to qualify for USA Nationals to a program developing World Qualifiers, Olympians and even medalists for Team USA. World Qualifiers such as Stephanie Garcia of Furman Elite and Kerri Gallagher of District Track Club. Olympians including Donn Cabral of New Jersey-New York, Aliann Pompey of Shore AC and Christina Epps of Garden State. Plus, Pan Am Games Gold Medalist Ashley Higginson of NJ-NY and Pan Am Games Silver Medalist Heather Miller-Koch of CPTC New Balance. I am reminded frequently that Norfolk Real Deal was the start of LaShawn Merritt's gold medal career. And there are so many more athletes to name -- athletes like Joe Gray and Mike Sayenko of Club Northwest and Lindsay Scherf of Westchester Track Club.

Over 40 EDC athletes qualified for the 2016 US Olympic Trial Qualifiers in the Marathon – almost every EDC had at least one qualifier – Aggies, BAA, Battle Road TC, Club Northwest, CPTC New Balance, Furman Elite, Garden State, Genesee Valley, Greater Boston, Kansas City, mpalas, Ragged Mountain, Strava TC, Syracuse, Twin Cities, Wisconsin Running and Zap Fitness. Truly, from the roads to the track and cross country in between, this is where the Club Council and EDC program have fulfilled its mission of developing hundreds and hundreds of athletes for national and international competition. Hats off to all the EDC clubs for their support – the athletes would have not made it without you.

Some EDC clubs have gone the extra mile by providing our athletes with incredible racing opportunities especially Eric Barron of Nike Team Run LA with the Jim Bush meet and Elliott Denman of Shore AC for the New Jersey International, not to mention Bill Roe and Becca Peter of Club Northwest for their all-comers meets.

But we need more targeted racing opportunities which is why I hope both Jonathan Marcus of Portland Distance Festival, Adrian Martinez, and Oxy High Performance and Lauren Primerano of Icahn Stadium and Ocean Breeze can work together, particularly to make the USATF National Club Track and Field Championships a premier event. Last year was the first year we

had high caliber fields in the majority of events including middle distance events, but we need to increase that to all events and expand the depth of all the fields.

In closing, I would like to thank a few special people who devoted hours and weekends to the Club Council and were such a pleasure to work with. These people really made my life easier but more important they always put the athlete first. I want to thank first, Skip Stolley, the former Chair of the Club Council, from whom I learned so much and who really got the ball going on the Council and the EDC program. Huge thanks to Mike Scott, the Chair of the Cross Country Council, for everything you did every year – you even took pictures at the Track Club Nationals year after year. Under your direction, the Cross Country Council and Club Council were one team and I am really going to miss working with you. I am so grateful to Norb Sander of the Armory who held special elite races so EDC athletes could qualify for USA Indoors and provided both prize money and rabbits for these events – the athletes needed all three (competitive fields, prize money and rabbits) and Norb always came thru. Special thanks to Steve Vaitones of New England Association, whose Distance Medley Relay race hosted at USA Indoor Nationals, started my own athletes' dreams of nationals, and finally, to Bill Roe for his vision, dedication and hard work for the Council. Bill, you have been an amazing coach, meet director, games committee, official, and friend.

Thank you all.

Best,

Devon Joan Martin

Chair, USATF Club Council and Elite Development Club Program