

Thank you, Dennis Olafson!

Track & Field fans have probably noticed the fellow with the long beard and easy stride constantly crisscrossing the infield and track at Hayward Field during every event at the historic venue.

This fellow visits every competitive event several times during a meet. He seems to know all the officials, support personnel and many of the athletes. No one really knows how many miles he walks (and occasionally jogs) during a typical day at the track. He seems to be a magnet that draws officials seeking advice, asking questions and wanting problems solved.

Controlled Chaos

Dennis Olafson is the guy in the middle of this controlled chaos. He is clearly one of the key people that keep Hayward events on schedule and a key influence on keeping Eugene the center of the track & field world.



For several years Dennis has served as the Chairman of the Oregon Track Club Officials Committee and the Coordinator of Officials for the University of Oregon Track and Field program. Dennis recently announced is he stepping down from both positions. "I want to devote more time to actually officiating track & field events", he explained. The good news for TrackTown USA, Dennis has agreed to continue sharing his 40 years of experience and insight by serving as a consultant to the University Track & Field program. He has also agreed to be the Coordinator of Officials for the PAC 12 Track and Field Championships, the Prefontaine Classic and the U.S. Olympic Trials, all scheduled at Hayward in 2012.

The Beginning

In high school and in college Dennis was a track & field athlete, primarily the high jump. He took a few officiating classes in college and began serving as an official at occasional meets. Later he became the head of the high jump officiating crew at Hayward.

One of his crew members was Bill Kelly, the current OTC president and current high jump crew chief. "Dennis saw a need seven years ago and stepped up to fill it when he agreed to act as the Coordinator of Officials," Kelly pointed out. "Dennis brought cohesiveness and stability to the support OTC provides Hayward Field officials. His ability to anticipate problems and his knowledge of track and field have been invaluable in this position. While his expertise will be missed, I'm delighted he is still available to help guide us through the Pac 12 Conference Championships and the TrackTown12 USA Track and Field Olympic Trials," Kelly added.

Vin Lananna, University of Oregon Associate Athletic Director and Director of Track & Field, commented on Dennis and his service to the University: "Oregon Track and Field is deeply indebted to Dennis for his service to the program and his role as a leader of our hard working and dedicated group of officials. Often the first one there and the last one to leave, he brought his tremendous expertise to improve the competitive experience for our athletes and fans. We are looking forward to working with Dennis on the Pac-12 Championships and the Olympic Trials." In his seven years as Coordinator of Officials, Dennis has become a trusted, reliable resource for everyone at Hayward. People admire and appreciate his calm leadership style. He always has a kind word and smile for everyone no matter how busy his schedule. The Oregon Track Club wants to thank Dennis for all he has done for track & field