



Dale Story Oral History Interview, January 9, 2014

Title

“Running Barefoot and Inspired by Bolero: Oregon State's First National Champion”

Date

January 9, 2014

Location

Valley Library, Oregon State University.

Summary

In the interview, Story recounts his upbringing in Orange, California, including his struggle with polio, his love of the outdoors, his early running career and athletes that he admired as a young man. Much of the interview focuses on Story's time at Oregon State College with particular attention paid to his athletic endeavors. Memories of his teammates and coach Sam Bell are shared, as are the details of his training regimen. Story also reflects on the 1961 NCAA cross country championship meet and the attention that his barefoot victory generated. From there, he discusses his 1961 track season and the changes in his interests that led him to drift away from running in favor of exploring the outdoors. The remainder of the interview is concerned with Story's life after Oregon State, including his teaching and coaching career at Wallowa High School and his continuing passion for the wilderness.

Interviewee

Dale Story

Interviewer

Chris Petersen

Website

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/story/>

Transcript

Chris Petersen: Okay, Dale. If you would, please introduce yourself, give your name and today's date, and our location.

Dale Story: Yes. My name is Dale Story. It's January the 9th, 2014, and I am presently at my old alma mater, Oregon State University.

CP: So, we will talk a lot about your association with OSU, but we want to start first at the beginning. You were born in 1942?

DS: Either that or 1842, I can't remember which one. [Laughs] All right, 1942.

CP: In Orange, California?

DS: Yeah. Well, actually born in Los Angeles, but don't tell anybody that.

CP: So you grew up in Orange?

DS: Yes, went to Orange High School.

CP: How would you characterize Orange, growing up?

DS: Frustrating. Very frustrating, because I was a lover of nature and outdoor, and we lived in a community with orange groves and some city, and I didn't like it down there at all; I hated it. I liked to hunt and fish, and that was pretty limited. And anyway, like any teenager, hormones are flowing, but it's difficult to fit into your school and this and that, and I, as I analyze it now, I think I might have had a little man complex, psychologically. And so, running—I always loved to run, but running was my forte, and so, that's what I put all of my energy into. I wasn't a very good student. So it was frustrating. I wasn't performing well academically. Athletically, it was nice; it was coming, you know.

CP: So your love of the outdoors is something that's always been with you?

DS: Always, and it's been—maybe I'll tell you later, it's been a problem because it was a magnet that was drawing me, and it affected my athletic career here at Oregon State, so.

CP: You had an illness when you were young.

DS: I had polio when I was 11 years old. It was a temporary paralysis. didn't have to go in an iron lung, or permanent paralysis, but I was paralyzed from the neck down for about eight-and-a-half months, something like that. It was scary, real scary. Then I got over that, and I couldn't do anything. I couldn't run; I couldn't participate in PE for about two years, two-and-a-half years, so I was kind of a puny little runt, [laughs] you know? And so, when I came to high school, I was able to start running then, and I don't know if I should go any further, or what?

CP: No, that's fine.

DS: Oh. And I remember this as if it happened yesterday: I came up to the coach, who was a music teacher and had run cross country, so he was the coach. I said, "Coach, can I run? Can I try out for your team?" And they was going to have a race that day, first day, just to see what its potential was. It was a big school, 2,000 kids, roughly. And he said, "No," he said, "You're too little." And I just about broke into tears, and I said, "Hey, you know, let me try, just let me try." So I had to beg him three times, and finally after the third attempt, he said, "Well, okay." And so we ran that race that day, and one kid beat me, a senior.

And from that point on, I didn't have a whole lot of respect for him, because I thought it was an inappropriate thing for somebody to say that to somebody else, which was a good lesson for me, because later, when I became a coach, I always remembered that, and I thought, "Dale, don't you ever give your opinion about some kid. You wait and let him make the decision on whether he can be a shot putter, distance runner, sprinter, or what." So, that was a good education. Kind of negative in the beginning, but it also made me want to prove him wrong, [laughs] you know.

CP: So you were running from an early age?

DS: Oh yeah, I just loved to run when I was a kid. And that was elementary school. You know, you didn't run anything long, but. And then the polio is what really scared me, because I loved to run, but all of the sudden, in two days I'm basically paralyzed, you know? It's a pretty spooky thing.

CP: What was the recovery process like for you?

DS: Well, it was incredible to show the amount of love my mother had for me, because my father had—I really didn't have a father. From five years old, they got divorced and he was not much of a person to brag about at all—heavy alcohol, a women-chaser; not something you were proud of. But I had mother to compensate for it. She was just a really, really great lady. And she would take me, and roll me from the bed onto a carpet on the wood floor [0:05:02], and then drag that carpet to the bathtub and fill it with warm water, and then lift me up and put me in there, because I'm kind of a light wimp at the time. And I kept thinking, "I hope my mother loves me." Because you could, you knew that you could slide down in the tub and drown. [Laughs]

But anyway, she would take and exercise my arms to keep atrophy from happening, and we did that twice a day, day in and day out. And as far as anything else, I didn't get the polio shots, and got it before that, because the polio vaccine, Salk vaccine, was just kind of coming in, I think. I think it was 1953. And then gradually, things started to come back, but it was pretty slow. I mean, yeah, I did a lot of soul searching there.

CP: Did you miss a year of school?

DS: Yeah, I missed part of school, and I did some home schooling, just verbal stuff. And anyway, I was thinking as I drove over here; I was thinking that's one of the things I never paid a lot of attention to over the years, but looking back on it, I was thinking—and maybe it's because of my age. You know, you get closer to death, you look back and say, "Hey, what happened here?" And I got to thinking; I thought, "Hey, with the grace of God, or however, I got over that." It wasn't anything I did, but it was something that I was able to overcome and then capitalize on going ahead, which kind of surprised me, looking back now. You know what I mean? And I said, "How did I do that? I don't know." But it did teach you not to give up, I think. Yeah.

CP: So when you were healthy, besides running, what were some of the other hobbies you had, or interests as a boy?

DS: Oh, it was always nature, hunting, fishing, running. I mean, that was the whole thing. And of course when puberty kicked in and hormones were flowing full-tilt, well, girls were great. But I was so shy. I mean, you wouldn't believe it now, but I was so shy it was unbelievable. And athletics helped me break out of that. And then later on when I became a teacher, communication with people was a lot easier. So, yeah, and I've got to be honest with you, as a little kid, here I am, you know, puny little runt. I was 5-foot-2, 89 pounds in high school, freshman. So that's pretty small. So I wasn't attracted by—I mean, women weren't attracted to me, girls.

And I kept thinking, "If I run fast, the girls will like me." I mean, what male has not thought of that? You know, if I score points in a football game, they're going to love me. So that was, deep down in the recesses of my brain, that was probably a little bit of an incentive. It didn't work [laughs] very good, you know, but anyway. It was a good run. It was a good experience.

CP: And you did run fast as a high school kid.

DS: Well, it depends on how you measure it, you know, compared to some people. I started out my freshman year around 5:07 in the mile, and then 2:30 in the 800—or 880 back in those days, 880, half-mile. And at sophomore level I ran 4:32 in the mile, and then about a 2:17. My junior year, I ran a 4:22.6 in the mile, and then—I think it was 2:04, 2:02. And then my senior year I ended up running 4 minutes, 11 seconds and on a relay I ran a 1:52.6, 880. The guy was coming in pretty slow, but when I got the baton it was almost at a dead standstill, but it was still—I was pretty proud of that.

CP: And 4:11 was the national high school record, was it not?

DS: Yes. Yeah, that was. I was pretty fortunate there. It's an interesting story, if I don't mind your relating it. I was sitting in the library—I remember this just as it, like I said, happened yesterday—sitting in the library at Orange High School, and I'm looking at the *Sports Illustrated* magazine. On the back page is a picture of Dyrol Burleson from Cottage Grove, Oregon, and his arms are out, extended like this, and his head is forward, and he's got this kind of grotesque look. And he broke the national record of 4:13.4, I think it was. Yeah, 4:13.4. And I thought to myself—I was a sophomore, and I thought, "That's inhuman. That's impossible." My best time was 4:22. [0:10:00] And I never put any more thought to it. Then my senior year, in February, we ran at a meet in—because we ran a lot of track meets, 23 track meets, and I ran the mile on a distance medley relay. And again, I got the baton when it was fairly slow, and I ran a 4:19.8. And that was ahead of the state record. I broke the state record, theoretically. And I went home that night and I was jazzed! I mean, I had my running gear and I would always run, and I ran out in the hills with my running gear, and I just thought to myself, "I can break that record!" Because I had psychologically dipped under 4:20.

And it was easy! It was an easy deal. And once I started believing that I could do it, then my time started getting closer and closer. And I never really did make a huge attempt on it. I don't know why; I just was letting things fall into place, and then I ran, you know, 4:17, 4:15. And then one day at the Compton Cup, they had the best eight milers in the state of California run, and unfortunately, I ran a little bit too slow that first lap. Being a night meet, you usually have a tendency to go too fast. So I knew that, so I backed off a little bit, and I came by in 67, which is terrible. And so I immediately passed everybody on the curve, which is a no-no, but I thought, "Hey, I've got to go." And I ran a 63, and then a 62, and a 61. And I missed his record by two-tenths of a second. So I went home and I was thinking, "Well, I'd kind of like to get that record, but haven't got it yet. Maybe I'd better get it." But anyway, I finally got it that night, and I ran a 4:11. That was pretty exciting.

CP: Where was this?

DS: It was at Bakersfield Junior College. I ran about close to 10 o'clock at night, and the stands were built just vertical, so all of the people were—and I think there was 10 or 11,000 people there, which back in those days, that was a lot of people. But it was like they were right there, looking down on you, so if you had an ego problem, it was going to be solved that night. You know what I mean? It was kind of a thrill to have that many people. And up on the marquee, the football scoreboard, they had the time. They had the national record up there. And then as soon as the gun went off, they would start deducting time from it, and if there was any time left on the clock, then that would signify that the record was broken.

So I never did look at it, because I knew in my head what I had to do. But the ironic thing was, when I finished, I was on the victory stand, and I got a cramp—and I never got those cramps, never! And I get a cramp in my calf, and I'm standing up there, you know, it's yea-high. And it's cramped so bad that I kind of fall off. Guess who's giving the medals? Rafer Johnson for UCLA, Olympic decathlon champion. And I mean, what a hero! And he rubs my calf out with his hand. And for weeks I wouldn't let anybody touch it. I said, "Hey, Rafer Johnson rubbed that calf." [Laughs] But you talk about embarrassing! You set the national record and you can't even stand on the podium. [Laughs] God, it was funny. But anyway, it just happened. I don't know.

CP: Well you must have attracted a lot of attention after this?

DS: You mean the race or the calf?

CP: The race, yes. The race.

DS: Oh. Well, yeah, for a young boy that came out of polio, it was a pretty heavy thing, you know. A lot of colleges were—and I told the colleges, I said, "Hey. I'm going Fish and Game major, because I want to be a wildlife biologist. And so I am not going to attend your school, because you do not have a program, so save your tickets and give them to somebody else." I didn't exploit colleges. But yeah, it was kind of an ego trip to have that many people looking at you. And of course, back in those days, there was a lot more money floating around for scholarships, so probably was easier to get a full ride at different schools, you know. But that was the only thing that saved my rear end, was athletics.

CP: Do you remember anything memorable about the recruitment process from different places?

DS: Well, people would write you; they would call you on the phone, and occasionally you would meet people. But I'm pretty pragmatic. I would just dismiss anybody that I thought was a phony. And if people started talking about records, there was a couple of coaches say, "Well, if you come to this school, we have so-and-so, and so-and-so, and we can put together this team and break this record." And a friend of mine at Santa Ana Junior College, right next door, was a pretty good psychology major, because he said, "Hey Dale, you want to go fishing?" [0:15:02] Boom. Big John Ward was his name. He was the coach at Santa Ana Junior College, a great big outdoorsman, just tanned, and so he would take me fishing.

But every time we were out there in the boat fishing in Peters Lake in southern California, I hate to admit, the old Yorba Spanish Land Grant area that Mexico had given to the people in California—he would say, "What do you want? What's best for you? You should be looking at best for you, and not for the coach." I mean, he was a philosopher and a really smart guy. And of course he captivated my attention, and I wanted to run. And he took my father's place. He was like my father to me, you know. I remember coming home one day and telling my mother; I said, "Why couldn't you marry a man like John Ward?" And of course, that didn't make her feel too good.

And I wanted to run for him for two years, but couldn't, because I had to get on my Fish and Game courses, and junior college didn't offer that. I just had to take my basics there, so I could only run for him for one year. And in the meantime, I had communicated with Sam Bell, and he came down there to recruit me, and I had him at dinner at my house. I fed him alligator [laughs], because that—I'm pretty outdoorsman, and so coach killed an alligator and I had some of the meat, and I gave him alligator and some other—rabbit, or something. And boy, because this guy is not used to that.

So he's just like, "What kind of a guy is this?" [Laughs] So it was an education on his part. But I liked him a lot, and he was a real extremely compassionate man. And so that's how I ended up at Oregon State.

CP: What was your first impression of OSU?

DS: Well, I was blown out when we were flying in an airplane and we were coming in to Eugene—I hate to say that—and we were landing in Eugene Airport, and I saw that green. And I'm just in love with the country! I mean, I'm mesmerized by the mountains and the hills. It's just like being born again, you know. And then we take the 40-mile drive up to Corvallis, and yeah, the campus is just gorgeous. And to this day, I walk on it and I think, "This is the most beautiful place." With the flowers, and the landscape is beautiful, and of course, it was a lot smaller then. I think they had 10 or 12,000 people, just about. And of course, here I'm only 18 years old, and I'm there on scholarship, and I'm feeling like—I'm walking 10 feet tall, let me tell you. And it's exciting, you know. I'm going into college, Fish and Game, and to be independent.

And the biggest mistake I made, probably, was getting one of the first kayaks in Oregon. There was only two other people that I knew had a kayak. And I hit the Willamette River with my shotgun, and I'm hunting left and right. I mean, I'm just—well, I lost perspective of academia. So about the end of my first year, my grade average dropped to a little bit below C average. And boy, I get this letter from the admissions department saying, "If you don't get your grades back up, and get to this level, your scholarship is gone." You talk about getting somebody's attention. Bam! I took the kayak, stuck it in the basement, put the shotgun up, started studying, and all of the sudden the grades started coming up, and I started feeling confident. You know, I don't have to settle for a C, I can get a B, and I can get an A.

And it became fun. I think I was just terribly immature. So I began to discipline myself, and study in between classes, and pretty soon my grades were coming up, and I was feeling better, and I said, "Hey, this is okay." I kept my scholarship. But what an education! And that really helped me, because later on, by accident, I became a teacher. And for 30 years, I never forgot that lesson, and I could share that with my students by saying, "Look, I came out of school with a C-minus average, and I was on academic probation at Oregon State, and I made it. Why? Because I didn't give up. I paid attention to the people that told me what to do. I listened to them, and I got some degree of success."

CP: Were there any teachers that made a particular impact on you? Or any classes?

DS: Well, there was a teacher in—unfortunately I was too immature to get around to thanking him in high school, and he was a counselor. And he called me in one day, and for some reason I was hell-bent on running away from home. I was 16 years old. I mean, this is bizarre, but I had a thousand rounds of ammunition, 22 packs, everything. I mean, everything.

And I was a pretty good outdoorsman. Because I was frustrated. [0:19:59] And you know, my mother was wonderful, but she was kind of overbearing. And he looked me right in the eye and he says, "Dale, you've got a great track career ahead of you."

So I went home that day, and I thought, "When I was 14, I knew this much. When I was 16 I knew more." So then I said, "This guy is 55 years old, roughly, so he must know—extrapolating—he must know more than I do." So I sat there and weighed both, and I thought, "If anybody is wrong, who is it? It's got to be me." And I don't know why, but that kind of thinking has always been in my brain. It might have gotten me into trouble later on, but I mean, I just walked away thinking. I put the pack back up; I decided not to run away and tried to stay with the running. And I never went back and thanked that guy.

CP: Where were you going to go?

DS: I was going to go to Alaska. I was going up the east side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. I was going to travel at night, mainly, so nobody could catch me. But, you know, let's face it, I probably would have broken a leg, got an infection, bit by a rattlesnake, drowned in a river, and been gone. Yeah, this is serious! That's why I needed to thank that guy, and like an idiot, I was too selfish and never did. So, that was instrumental. And then, one time I got—well, this is academia. I got caught cheating on a test, and the teacher, who I didn't like, called me in and he stood, I stood in front of him, and he sat there and he said, "Dale, you're nothing but a common criminal."

Oh, jeez! You talk about humiliation? I mean, the tears started to come. And I walked away because I didn't want to be categorized like that, and I never forgot that lesson. And I'm sitting here at Oregon State, and I'm in a, I don't remember what it was, mammalogy class, or whatever it was—career. And this guy is sitting there. Now I'm thinking about cheating, not on that course, but on another one, and that damn guy comes back in my brain. And I'm thinking, "Oh, no! I can't do that. I would be a criminal." So I didn't cheat. I ended up getting a C or D, I don't know, on the course.

And then one time, another guy was copying my paper, and I couldn't tell him he was a common criminal, but what I could do, I took and purposely wrote down the wrong answers, and he copied them. Then he left, and I erased them, because I wrote them in pencil. And then I sat there longer and wrote the right answers. [Laughs] That guy never sat next to me again, because he had to fail the test! But anyway, so those were instrumental teachers that helped me.

And then of course, at Oregon State, the Fish and Game Department was a great bunch of people. As a matter of fact, it was ironic, because just before I came over here for this interview, I was over seeing Kelly Sullivan, and here's Andy Landforce. And I don't know if you know him, but Andy Landforce, while he was there in the Fish and Game Department, in the Cooperative Wildlife Division Extension Office, in the same building, meeting with the professors, and they were his buddies—he was good friends with what ended up to be two of my athletes from Wallowa High School. I didn't even know where Wallowa was at that time.

But all of the sudden, after I graduated from Oregon State, I ended up over at Wallowa, teaching and coaching, and that was the school that Amos Marsh was in, who played football here, and he was the captain of the track team when I first came here. I ended up teaching the Oveson boys, who were state champions. So I'm down here seeing Kelly, and I'm reading a sign on the board about Haley Oveson, who ran track here for Oregon State, June graduate, and here's Andy Landforce, in the building. And Andy and Sullivan—Andy's 96 years old, sharp as a tack. And so we just spent two and a quarter hours down there visiting. It was great.

CP: Yeah. We've actually interviewed him for this same project.

DS: Oh, have you really? He's an incredible man! And when I'm back in Wallowa County, the Oveson boys periodically talk about him, because he used to hunt with their dad, and I used to hunt on their dad's property. And what a small—but he had some wonderful philosophy, and he probably told you about this on this. That guy's an incredible guy, yeah.

CP: So, tell me about the transition to college athletics.

DS: Well, it was a lot tougher. I only ran against the boys in California, because at that time they didn't have the national high school meet; they had instigated that several years later. Excuse me. But when you got up here, you found out that there was a lot of other boys that were pretty tough. But I had always trained myself, and I was pretty self-motivated,

because I read everything I could get my hands on about all of the international athletes [0:25:00], Herb Elliott, Percy Cerutty, the coach, Mihaly Igloi from Hungary, and the list goes on and on—later on, Peter Snell and all of that. And I tried to copy their training programs.

But every time I would stand on the racetrack, I would look to my left, right, and I would say, "Any one of these people on this given day can beat me, so watch for them. They're the enemy." I would never take anybody for granted. I would never sit there and say, "Well, I'm faster than you." I would think, "I was faster than you yesterday, but that doesn't mean that today." So it was a good lesson. So when I came to Oregon State, I was kind of prepared for realizing that, okay, you know, there's a lot of tough athletes out here. And I certainly did experience that over the years. I got to tell you, my running was a lot to me my first couple of years, and then all of the sudden, here comes nature.

And it was embarrassing. I'd just got done indirectly—well, directly apologizing to Sam Bell, who I talked to just three weeks ago from this day, and he's 86 years old. And we talked, you know, emotional about the coach-athlete relationship. And I told him; I said, "I'm really sorry I didn't perform better for you and the school, but I had this tremendous magnetism of the north calling me to go to the wilderness, and enjoy hunting, and fishing, and explore." Because I was thoroughly convinced that all of that was going to be, pfft, gone. Wilderness areas were being developed, roads, and I wanted to enjoy it before I died.

Now, looking back on that, was that a mistake? I don't know. I couldn't avoid it. I tried to. One time I sat there and I was training after post-graduate—or after I got out of school. I was training for the Olympics, because that was always my desire. And I came home one day, and I thought, "What if I pull a muscle? What if I get the flu? What if something happens; I get knocked down on the track? Then four years of all of that dedication is lost." And the fear, the fear of failure, is a great motivator for me, and we just all shared that at the coaches' room down there in Kelly Sullivan's room. It was two women in there, athletes, and the fear of failure was a big one with all of us. And that's why I never did—to this day, I don't know how I would have done. You know? Never knew.

CP: So, what was your training regimen like during your college days?

DS: Well of course, keep in mind, Sam Bell was in control now, because he's the boss. But I was able to influence a little bit, particularly when we did a lot of fartlek. And we would go out the railroad tracks on the road out to Oak Creek, and the roads out to Oak Creek; that's right in off the canyon. And then all of those hills up there, I had all of them named—Annapurna, K2, Mount Everest. And we would use those as training runs. And they're steep, you know. And they've got soft, grassy slopes, and I would run barefooted up there, and we would run those babies and do repeats. We would run out there, and then do repeats up there on the hills, and then on back. And we would do that two to three times a week. And we would probably, I would guess 10, 14, 15 miles total, four out, four back, something like that.

But I always was keen on breaking things up, not doing the monotony. And Sam was pretty good at that, too. And then we would come back to the track and we would do repeat 200s, repeat 400s, repeat 800s, 200s—I said that, 2, 4s, 8s, occasionally some repeat three-quarter miles. And then of course, he would break it all up. I don't know, is that—?

CP: How about dietary?

DS: Oh, brother! Yeah, there was not, in my book. I was notoriously a glutton. I could eat anything and everything, because I think I had high metabolism. Probably paying for it now. [Laughs] I don't know. No, nobody really followed that then. Of course, my problem? I drank Pepsis, and still do. But to go back and say, "Well, would you have run faster if you had been on a real strict, today's diet?" I don't know. Who knows? Too many variables. One can say it certainly would be better for you, from what we know. [0:29:59] And of course, training is a little bit different now. But basically, we had some common knowledge back then, even though that was in the Paleozoic Era. [Laughs]

My idea was always to gradually warm up, slowly, and just increase the effort. And then cool-down was important. And then for the whole season, it was the same thing. Now, coach and I had a little different philosophy there, but then I kind of had to stick to his method. And he would start the workouts, the first of the season, notoriously hard, which to me was inviting injuries. And we did have a few injuries. But luckily, I was in good shape, because I was always in Alaska or—well at that time, British Columbia. And I was always backpacking in the mountains, and I was running in the mountains, and I was actually training. So when I came back for the first day of school, I was in shape. Not perfect, but I was in a

lot better shape than a lot of the other athletes. So, when we would start in with those first workouts, I could handle them without injuries. They couldn't, because they weren't ready. But he was the boss, and I wasn't, so.

But I did some of my own stuff, too. I was a little bit of a rebel. I remember one time, [laughs] should I say this? I remember one time, I had a beard. I was strutting my masculinity, and I had this well-trimmed beard, and it was shorter than this one. And he told me to take it off. We were going to go back east to a meet. And I thought to myself, "I came into the world with hair follicles in my skin. I'm going to leave the world with hair follicles in my skin. And you and nobody else has a right to come in and tell me what to do." So I showed up with my beard. He never said a word. I don't know if that's the right thing to do, but yeah, I was a pretty independent thinker, you know?

CP: You mentioned barefooting. This is something you started in high school, or earlier?

DS: Yeah. I started earlier, when I was a kid. You know, elementary, I just ran. Southern California, I ran around barefoot all of the time, and so. Then when I got into track, and well, cross country mainly, my theory was the less you carry, the faster you can be. So I said, "Well get rid of the—I'm not going to wear shoes." I didn't even wear a running top in the beginning. I just wore running shorts. And in those days you could do that. And so I ran, and of course down there it's hot and dry, and, but there's a lot of those goat heads, those stickers, you know? I don't know if you've been into those, but—yeah, you have. You have them in Pendleton. My feet were so calloused, I could just jump. I mean, I could feel them, but I'd jump in the air and then [snaps finger] take my hand and clear them off my feet, and then continue going through, you know.

And it was a little different when I got to Oregon State, here, because it was so wet that your feet—it was hard to keep them calloused and hard. And then another problem—let's face it, without claws, I would slip on the track, decomposed gravel and cinder, clay tracks, too. I would slip. So when my times got a little faster—I was stupid not to wear track shoes, because I had to have some traction. But in the state cross country championships down there, I ran barefooted, and it was a rocky, gravelly, dirt trail. How I got through that, I don't know, but I ran pretty far. It was a pretty good run.

I ran, let's see. The record was—there had been 13,000 kids running that race. It was at Mount SAC College, Mount San Antonio. And the record was 9:07, if I remember right, yeah. And I ran 8:45, barefooted. But I was kind of an animal that day. I happened to be over at my buddy's house, and he was playing some music, and we were playing football. And I went in to listen to the music, and it was Maurice Ravel's *Bolero*. I mean, you're familiar with that. And that was, of course, way before the movie, *10*. And I listened to that music, and I don't know what it was, but it mesmerized me, and I sat in that room by myself and played that record over and over for three hours.

So I went home, and that became my motivator. And I would play that music before every race. I'd strip down to my running gear, and I'd stand in front of a mirror, and I would try to visualize me, and I would run in place. Wouldn't go anywhere; I would just run in place to that music. And of course, you know it just raises and raises in crescendo. And that was to me like a race. [Imitates firing gun sound] So I tried to get Sam Bell here to play that music at the track meet. [0:35:01] I said, "Sam, I will run faster. I guarantee it." But he never would. [Laughs] Back in those days, you couldn't. Now you go to a cotton-picking high school track meet, they've got music everywhere! The kids have gotten power, but they don't play Ravel's *Bolero*.

But as a matter of fact, when I came here today, I came up from Eugene. I stayed at my buddy's house. I came the back road through Peoria, where I used to hunt the Willamette River all of the time, and I used to bicycle down to Eugene, and it was gorgeous. It was seven in the morning. It got light, green grass, and I played Ravel's *Bolero*, in just kind of a psychological preparation for today, and to bring back old memories. And God, it was neat. It really was cool.

CP: Yeah.

DS: I lived on that river. I've been through every channel, all the way from Long Tongue River up by Junction City up there, all the way down.

CP: On your kayak?

DS: Yeah. Well, I camped down there. I hunted, I fished, I trapped nutria, I deer hunted, pheasant hunted.

CP: So this was a normal weekend for you when you were in college?

DS: Yeah. And don't tell this to the Oregon State Alumni, because I didn't attend too many cotton-picking football games. That would not get very good—[laughs]. Yeah, I spent a lot of time down there doing that.

CP: Tell me more about Sam Bell.

DS: One of the finest men I ever met. I mean, just incredibly compassionate, very—pretty religious, but very concerned. When I first came up here, after one or two years I got married, and he would have my wife and I over for dinner, and later a child came, and he'd have them over. I mean, he just, he took care of all of his athletes really well. He was very generous man, and was a good coach. Like I said, at times I thought maybe he was a little bit too anxious, and pushed a little too hard, but then everybody has different opinions. So.

CP: How about some memorable teammates?

DS: Oh, we had a lot of those. We had a lot of fun. Cliff Thompson was one that I used to run around—we hunted together all the time. He was on that cross country team with me. And we called him Digger, because of the digger squirrels down in Winston. And we would hunt together, and go on the river and duck hunt, and everything. And then one time we were on a trip, and we had my kayak, and it was November of 1963. And if I remember right, that was the year of—the big flood was there, but I don't remember if it was '63; I think it was.

And we were down there drifting the Umpqua River, and he knew the river, supposedly. Well, I mean, there's flood in the fallowing fields. And luckily we've got wool clothes on, because it's cold. And luckily we had life jackets, because I didn't often wear them. We're in the middle of the river, and I'm looking at these rapids, and I'm saying, "Hey, that looks neat!" So I've got a double-seater kayak, made in Germany, and pretty soon we get up on it and he says a couple of profanity words that I can't say here, and he says, "Holy moly, it's that dam!" And I said, "Backpaddle!" So we tried to backpaddle to get—well, the current was just too swift; couldn't do it.

So at the last minute, as I saw it going over the deal, I says, "Paddle real hard forward," thinking that maybe we could shoot the kayak out and have some degree of levelness, instead of just plunging straight down. And I looked down there and there was boiling water. It was about a 12- to 14-foot drop, which was frightening. And then down below was all of this turbulent, boiling water. I didn't know if there was a boulder down there, or rocks. Well, we went down, hit the water; he goes completely under water. And I've got air sponsons, and they weren't tied in with our aprons. The kayak pops up, and we're still upright. And I'm thinking, "We're going to make it."

And I go about halfway under water, and then all of the sudden we rolled. And I don't know what rolled us, whether it was the turbulent, boiling water, whether it was him, or was me; I have no idea. So we're upside down when we come out. When we come out, it's so cold, I can't talk. I'm [stammering sounds], you know. And he started to yell for help, and I'm trying to tell him to shut up, because I think we can get out of here. Well, we drifted downstream, and there's a bridge down there by Roseburg. Well, we drifted down there, and finally he let go of the kayak and made it to shore, but I didn't see him get out.

And I stayed with my kayak. Finally, I said, "I can't hold on." My hands were so damn cold, I had to let go, and the kayak drifted down. Anyway, we both got out, and the police came, or the fire department came over there with a rescue boat. They couldn't even get their damned boat across the river. [0:40:00] So we got picked up on the other side, taken back, and we were in the news media, and everything. We both survived. I ended up getting my kayak back. But that was a memorable experience. We almost lost two runners right there. Stupid! [Laughs]

CP: That was during school?

DS: Yeah, it was at Thanksgiving vacation time, yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah, that was a big flood. It's historically notified. But we were on that river, and damn near drowned. And then we did some other things, some of them I can't tell you. Oh, one time we were out, gosh sakes, out west of town, and we were going to shoot some geese out at Glassers. It was an old refuge, and it was called, well, you know where it is. It's halfway out there, almost 6 or 7 miles out of town. And all of the rich people got to hunt there, and they had ducks and geese all over the place.

So we went out there one night, and we were going to shoot some geese. Well, we're sneaking up on this place, and we didn't realize that geese can see better at night than we can. And all of a sudden, we're down there, and all of a sudden we see a light, and, "Hey, a light. Light!" And one of them says, "Hit the ground." So we hit the ground, and we're laying down. And I look back and there's a light shining off my buddy's back pocket. He's got the flashlight that clicked on.

CP: [Laughs]

DS: So here in the middle of this Kentucky bluegrass field, with this light shining up, and we're trying to hide. It doesn't work that way. So we finally—we never fired a shot. We finally decided we'd better get back. So we ditched our shotguns in a culvert. Now we're muddy, wet and muddy. And we're walking back. And here's three guys on the highway coming back to Corvallis, and the cops stopped us, about one in the morning. Well, there was three—two or three escapees from a jail over in Bend, and they thought we might be it, because, you know, we were grubby. And, "Now, what are you guys doing out here?" Well, we've got to come up with an excuse real quick. So I said, "Well, our fraternity took us out and dropped us off, and we've been trying to find our way through the damned dark, because we're trying to find our way back to school."

Luckily, we didn't have the guns with us. Anyway, so they checked us out, our ID, and we didn't look like any criminals. So then we went back and got our shotguns two days later in the culvert; we had them. So we didn't want to do it right away. [Laughs] But anyway, luckily we didn't get caught. I'm sure some college kids had pranks worse than that. Ours were not nasty, they were just illegal. [Laughs]

CP: [Laughs] So take me through that first season of cross country and track.

DS: Oh, wow! Now you're questioning my memory bank. Take you through it with emotions, or what? Well, I've got to remember, was that the first or the second season? I remember one of the seasons there, first or second. Running in—well, I can't remember every meet, but some of the one that I remembered was really, really exciting was the Modesto Relays down at Modesto, California, one of the biggest meets on the west coast. Well, in the United States, too. Oregon State just absolutely was brilliant that night, and that's the night that four of our boys broke the world's record in the four-man two-mile relay. I really wanted to run on that team, but I was running the two-mile, so I didn't get a chance to, and don't know if I was their strong—I wasn't their strongest man.

Then I ran the two-mile that night, and I went in and I was running at a 9:06, or something like that, and I didn't really plan on winning the race. I just got in there, and I didn't see how—I think I had come off a slight injury, and I was thinking about seeing how well I could do. And I'm in the race, and come by the first mile, and I'm looking fairly decent. I'm running with some pretty good boys, a couple of them from Australia. All of a sudden, with about two laps to go, three laps to go, I'm thinking, "Hey, I'm right in the mix. I'm in the running." And coach is, Sam is yelling at me, "You can do it! You can do it!" Something to that effect. So I pick up the tempo a little bit more, and now with a lap to go I'm in second or third. And I'm thinking, "Man, this is feeling good."

And it is one of those nights, and we talked about it with Kelly, that on that given day, the human body or the brain, everything is working perfection. It must have been, because I've experienced days where they didn't. [Laughs] And so I capitalize on that. And all of a sudden, I came by, and I met some of my old junior college buddies who were in the stands, and I'm pretty alert, and I'm listening to them. And I kind of look over at them, and I take the lead. [0:45:02] And I ran the last 220 yards, because my buddies were timing me, in about 25.8, which is sprint speed, after coming off of a pretty good two-mile. And I just, I couldn't believe it! I was just like I was, I was, couldn't be stopped. And I'm sure other athletes have felt the same thing.

And I won that, and I ran an 8:46 two-mile, and at that time I was told by the authorities that that was the fastest time in the world for juniors. Now a junior was anybody under 20 years old. Nobody had run that fast. And then later on a guy named Tony Blue from Australia ran faster. So theoretically, I don't know what you'd want to say. For me, for my own ego, that was a junior world's record. I don't know. But I was pretty proud of that one. And that night, every athlete that stepped out there for the Beavers just annihilated our opponents. It was one of those nights everything shined. Yeah, that was a real exciting moment.

CP: Well, your first year was the national championship year for cross country, correct? Or was it the second year?

DS: I think that was the second year. No, that was the first year, because I was a sophomore, yeah. Yeah, because I graduated in '59, went to school '59 and '60, came up here in '61, yeah. That's 52 years ago. What do you expect? [Laughs] Memories!

CP: How did that season unfold? Do you have memories of that? I mean, were you guys really good from the get-go?

DS: Well, we were good. I don't think that we realized that we had that good of a team. The funny thing is we only ended up running with five guys, and that's the bare minimum. I had heard—I didn't know the reason behind it, but I had heard somebody that the president of the school didn't think we had enough money, or the athletic director, and therefore we couldn't take seven runners, which you normally have seven and the first five count. Well, you've got two backup. You've got two spare tires, in a sense. Well, we didn't have any. And actually we had one of our athletes, Jerry Brady, who had run much faster and he had some tendinitis problems, so he ran not up to par in that race because of that injury. And had he been up to par, like one can say, well, we might have been even better. But luckily all five of us finished.

And we had pretty good camaraderie. We didn't have any infighting, or anything else. But we had five different personalities. I'm still running around with Bill Boyd, who was third for us, in 16th place. And he's a lawyer, semi-retired now, up in Coeur D'Alene, Idaho. And I just saw him about a month and a half ago, spent a couple of days up there with him. And we go over old times, and a lot of neat things that you learn in athletics, as you well know from your athletic career. And talking to the boys down there at Sullivan's room today, the one thing is the perseverance. You just don't give up.

Once you learn that in athletics, and you get some success—I mean, you've got to have some success—but then pretty soon, you can just use that as a tool or weapon the rest of your life. And I told my kids all of the time I was teaching them, I didn't go to Wallowa to coach. I ended up doing that by accident, but I loved it. And once I got in, I put a lot of energy into it. But I kept telling the kids every time, I says, "What I hope to teach you, and what you will learn here, is tools. You may not win. You may not get a gold medal. You may not be a state champion, but you are going to take tools with you the rest of your life, so that you can apply them to your job, your marriage, your relationships with other people, anything. And you're going to learn to set goals and try to figure out a way to achieve them have humility when you suffer defeat, learn how to bounce back, and learn not to give up." And I said, "If I can teach you those things right there, then we will have been successful." And to me, that was a cornerstone of athletics.

Now, I hope as soon as I say that that I continue doing it. At 72 years old, I continue doing it in my life, but it's helped me through everything I can think of. [0:49:59] I unfortunately got divorced one time, and I was coming back from home, and I was just devastated. I mean, it was like the world pulled out from under me. And I'm thinking about driving the car as far as I can west and just, [popping noise] adios, in the ocean. And just, the thought entertained my brain, and man, I grabbed a hold of myself and I said, "Wait a minute. I have a child here that cares and loves for me, loves me." And I came back and I said, "I was an NCAA champion. I didn't give up then; I'm not going to give up now." And I remember that just buried in my brain.

And I immediately got home and I called my buddy, he was a doctor. He was a good friend of mine; had a lot of psychology. And I said, "Harley," Scholz, Harley Scholz. I says, "I thought some bad things today. I thought suicide." He says, "That's okay." I said, "What?" He said, "That's okay." And I says, "You mean that's normal?" He said, "Yeah, that's normal. All human beings at some point in their life will think about that. The important thing is, don't act on it. Don't start it rolling." So all of a sudden I thought, "Ah. I feel normal."

And I was able to, you know, kick it out, but the athletic lessons that were taught me by whoever, my coaches obviously, other athletes, maybe my mother, I don't know, taught me not to give up. And you see that repeated over, and over, and over, with all kinds of great athletes and Olympic champions who had adversity, but they just kept—persistence. It's not a foolproof thing. You're not always going to get the gold medal. But you're going to get further by doing that, as you well know, than not doing it.

CP: So what do you remember about the day of the championship race in Michigan?

DS: In Michigan?

CP: Cold day.

DS: Cold day. It was about—well they said it was 32; I thought it was 30, but anyway. If I remember, there was occasional patches of snow, but not much, just mainly bare, but cold. A lot of acorns from those oak trees on the course. And the wind was blowing, and so we wore our sweat suits to the last, right 'til the very end, because I didn't want to take them off, but everybody looked at me like I was running barefoot, and they just laughed. And they thought, "Well, you're crazy, you know?" And then they were talking about hills, and I said, "Boy, you boys don't know what hills are. You need to come out to Oregon. We can show you what hills are." These things were just gentle rises. Pretty excited.

I wrote down everything that I felt after the race, and it's on a piece of paper at home, and Kinsey Gomez here at the school does the same thing, and I think that's great. Because as soon as the race was over, I would write down all of the positive and all of the negative things that came to my mind, and my emotions, because I wanted to capture them. And then later on I could share them with myself, or my family, or kids, whatever. And I remember being a little nervous, because you always get nervous. You get the butterflies, and then you get them out of your system in the first few meters.

But what really scared me was the funnel we had to go through. We had I think it was 134 runners, if I remember right, and it was two posts that we had to go through about roughly 400 meters out, yards, or 440. And I knew that to channel 134 people through that posts, that if you're not in the first 5 or 10, you're screwed. And so I didn't want to do that; I didn't want to go out that fast, but there was no other choice. So I think that first quarter was probably pretty close to 57. I had somebody there timing, but a little faster than I wanted to be, but you had to do it. And I don't remember exactly; I was like fourth or fifth coming through there, something like that.

And then the race progressed and I just gradually moved up a little bit. And then I got to a point where there was another gentleman runner from BYU, his name was Ratti Matti. What a name! He's from Finland. Nice kid, nice kid. And we were running beside each other, and I pulled up on him or he pulled up on me; I don't remember. And we turned to each other, and I said, "How far back?" And he says, [with Finnish accent] "They were 40 meters back there, you know, something like that." And I said, "Well, we'll run together. We'll help each other." "Yah, yah, we'll help each other." And so we just got a little team camaraderie, and we just kept going. We said, "Well, we'd better pick it up a little bit more." And it was kind of fun running with somebody.

But then I began to think, this can't go on forever. I want to win this race. You want to win the race. We can't do it together. And so I decided when I hit the hill, that—what they called the hill—was my strong point. I was pretty strong on hills. [0:54:59] So I thought, "I'll hit that hill with full fervor." And I sprinted up that baby as hard as I could. Then, I had always done before it, when you get over the top, as soon as I get out of sight, they remember, I was 30 meters ahead of them. When I go over the top, and I'm out of sight, if I can take that 30 meters and now make it 35 meters, and they don't know it, they don't see me speed up, then all of the sudden their brain starts working against them. So I did the same thing; I just let gravity pull me down that hill as fast as I could, in control. Whether it worked or not, I don't know.

But then I thought, since John Ward, that coach from junior college was so important to me, he was like my father, that was the thing I thought about explicitly. I says, "John, this race is for you. I'm doing this for you." And so the emotions just [growls] really got to a pitch, to a fervor. And so I strongly held the lead there for, I think it was like 500 yards from the finish, that hill was, roughly. Yeah. And crossed the line, and thought, "Wow. Did it! Don't know how, but I did it." [Laughs] And our team just came in great. Rich Cutty was 12th, and Bill Boyd was 16th, and Cliff Thompson was 25th, and Jerry Brady, unfortunately I don't have the place that he had right now to tell you, but he had a bad tendon, and he was back there a ways. So all of a sudden, we're all standing there grinning at each other.

CP: Did you feel like you had run one of your better races that day?

DS: No, I was disappointed at the time, but it was so cold. I always kind of like to get course records, and I wasn't able to get that. And yeah, I was a little disappointed at the time. But that damn wind was cold, you know. I just had on—compared to today's runners, I had on running tights, you know, shorts, and a running short sleeve top. We had no gloves; we had no hats. We had no long sleeve shirts, none of that fancy stuff. So you know, it probably took a little bit of toll. But again, I don't know. Who's to say that you could have run faster, or would have run faster? But keeping the body warm with those long tights wouldn't have hurt, because they weigh nothing. Yeah, so.

CP: You beat six future Olympians in that race.

DS: Probably by accident. [Laughs] On that given day, things clicked for me. Maybe they didn't for them. Keep in mind, there was other times that I didn't click, and I had what we would call, what I would call failure, you know. But that's life. That's, yeah. The only unfortunate thing that I had was I never did find out if I could have been in the Olympics. And when I was 35 years old that just beat me up, and I kept thinking, "Why didn't I do that? Why didn't I do that?" And I kept thinking, "At the time, you made the best decision you could do under the circumstances." Looking back on it now, it's different, but sure, there's a lot of things that are different now. But at the time I just couldn't make it fly.

CP: One of those Olympians was Billy Mills, in that race.

DS: Oh yeah, yeah.

CP: Did you ever know him at all, or meet him?

DS: Well, afterwards, I think—no, I didn't. But he came to the school where my granddaughters were running, and gave a speech, up in Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, about I think roughly two years ago. And it was ironic, because they sat there and listened to him, and of course they were mesmerized, and I would be, too. Here's an Olympic champion, and an Indian too, and I really love the Indians. I just think they got really a bad deal. Anyway, but Sioux Indian, and yeah, fantastic. But again, who knows?

CP: How did the team celebrate afterwards?

DS: Well, we didn't drink. [Laughs] We were teetotalers, at least I was, and two of the three of the other guys. We didn't do too much that I remember, just sat around, I don't know. God, that's a good question. You might have to ask them. [Laughs] But we didn't go out and party or anything. It was kind of low-key. And I remember when we came back, Bill Boyd I think—yeah, Bill Boyd told me just not too long ago, he says, "When we came back to Oregon State, and landed, a few people showed up and said, 'Hey, good job.'" And he said it was like nothing, you know. And it was a little different than what you might see today.

But then, there's more kids today. There's more communication. [1:00:00] Things are bigger, and let's face it, I mean, I don't want to knock anybody's performance or anything, but this is cross country. This is not the big, major sport, football, basketball, you know. So, in that sense, it would have been nicer if it was a major, major sport, but it didn't, and so you just had to face reality. But we were pretty proud of it, you know.

CP: You received some attention partly for the barefoot piece, I'm sure, but you were in *Time* and *Newsweek*, is that correct? You were in several magazines.

DS: Yeah. Right. Right. Yeah it was kind of a thrill. [Laughs] Back in those days, nobody was running barefoot, so it was something unique. And I didn't do it to gain attention; I just did it because it was comfortable and I just thought it was faster. And since it worked for me, I kept it up. And all of the sudden, people started gravitating toward the barefoot runner, the barefoot runner. Then later on came Zola Budd, from South Africa, ran barefooted. And the big one was Abebe Bikila from Ethiopia, a marathon Olympic champion, and ran barefoot through the streets of Rome. I never ran through the hard pavement of Rome. I ran through gravel and dirt roads, so I probably, but. And now all of the sudden there's this new emphasis on running free, and with feet, and they've got those special shoes today that—but I told my friends I probably got more notoriety out of running half-naked than I did—or barefooted than I did with my times.

CP: Where did you live when you were in Corvallis?

DS: Down at 4 ½ A Street, down by the old A&W, you know? By the railroad tracks. Well, that was part of my stay, because I stayed in several places. And I was telling the boys over there today, it was kind of an old story, I used to walk to the track, because I would drop my books and this and that, and I would walk up the railroad tracks. Well, the train would come by, so I'd just jump on the train.

So one day, because I loved to do that stuff, you know, and secretly tried to sneak on the train when they couldn't see you. Well, I'm up on the train, and I'm coming by Gill Coliseum, and a bunch of the athletes are out there on that track field,

it was the intramural track field at the time, in Westhall Field. And I yelled at them, and they're yelling at me. Well, the cotton-picking train starts picking up tempo. [Imitates train chugging quickly] And it's heading over to the coast! And I'm thinking, "I've got to get off this damn thing." And I'm thinking, "Oh man, we're moving faster than I thought."

So I get down, coming down the handrails, and I'm thinking, "Man, I've got to make a big jump here to clear everything, and when I hit I've got to roll so I don't break anything." But it's some gravel there, too. And I think, "God, I've got to get off. I can't wait any longer." So I jumped off, and I rolled, and I made it, but not by far! And I thought that from that point on I had better be a little bit more careful. So that was fun. I used to ride that a lot. It's only a half mile, but still, it was fun.

CP: You mentioned running in the Oak Creek area. Were there any other places around here that you really liked to run?

DS: Well, mainly we ran up there because it was relatively close. We had a nice warm-up getting out there, and it was isolated. Well it was McDonald Forest that we ran, through the roads in McDonald Forest. Oh, and that brings up an interesting story, if you don't mind me saying. We're running out one of the roads going out McDonald Forest. It's all owned by the Oregon State School of Forestry, the university.

And there's this house there, and all of a sudden this woman steps out from behind a tree with a pistol in a holster. I'm not making this up; this is absolute truth. And I stop, and she says, "What are guys—what are you doing up here? You can't be up here." And I said, "Ma'am," and I started to use logic, "This is property of the Oregon State University. We're on the Oregon State Cross Country team. We're running up the road. We're not bothering anybody." "You get out of here," and this and that. So anyway, somehow, we get up the road and we're coming back, and the cotton-picking husband to her comes out on the porch with a shotgun. And my buddies see that shotgun, and they start to run. And I say, "Don't run. Don't run." Because I know what he's trying to do, he's intimidating us.

But I measured—because I'm a hunter, I measured the distance and I think, "He can't hurt us at that distance with a shotgun." Because as soon as he brings the rifle up all we have to do is turn our heads so our eyes don't get hit by BBs, but it's not going to kill us. And my buddies are starting to run. I said, "Don't run. Don't run!" And so he and I started exchanging verbal stuff, "You get off the damn property," and this and that. I said, "We're not on your property. We're on public ground here, and we're not bothering anybody," and this and that. [1:05:01] He said, "You come over here." And I said, "Do you think I'm crazy? I'm going to step foot on your property and you've got a shotgun?"

I was ticked off, I mean really ticked off! So I had a plan for retaliation, and it was not good. I will not get to heaven if I tell you this story. We were going to come back and make him pay a price. Thought about it, maybe. Anyway, so finally in the end didn't do it. Because I hate being intimidated by a damn gun, because I've got guns too, but I didn't use guns on him. So I went to the Corvallis—the state police, I mean the school police and the city police. Anyway, that guy worked for the physical plant at Oregon State! They fired him.

CP: Hm.

DS: Yeah. They had been threatening other people, but that was the straw that broke the camel's back. And so in the end he paid a price, but boy, I was mad. Because if I'd have had a shotgun, we'd have had a little fight. I wasn't about to have somebody walk over me like that. I even said to the lady with the gun, "What are you going to do, shoot us?" And she said, "Don't get smart with me." But I was close enough that if I had to, I could have reached for that gun. You know what I mean, if I had to. It was a pistol. I didn't think she was real good with it. But that was funny. It was pretty exciting, though. Here's a bunch of young athletes. We're just feeling our oats; our hormones are flowing, but I didn't like being intimidated like that. But he lost his job. That was, that was interesting.

CP: Did you have a job during college?

DS: Yeah. Sam Bell got us a job working for Charles T. Parker Construction Company, who built Parker Stadium, which is before Reser Stadium, Reser. And he had a construction company up in Portland, and he did a lot of power line jobs for Bonneville Power Administration. So he would hire us athletes to work. Well, he got his money's worth because here we are, mainly track, a few wrestlers, a few football players, and we're all wanting to stay in shape, so we work like a madman. Well, we produced a lot of productivity for him. And so we worked on the power lines up and down the Columbia River, quite a bit.

And then coach got me a job, or I did—I don't remember how—for the Leading Plywood Corporation out here in Philomath, which was a learning lesson. I quit one night, didn't like it, was real resentful, like an immature butthole, I was. It wasn't that bad, but I quit. And I'll be danged if I went back to pick up my check, and guess what the guy said to me? He says, "Dale, you've got a job here any time you want to. You're a good worker." And I just felt [imitates air escaping a balloon]—I felt so humiliated. I thought, "I quit this guy, didn't give him any notice because I didn't like the job, and he turns around and says, 'Hey, you've got a job here anytime.'" So I remember that, too. I got taught a lot more lessons than just in the schoolroom, classroom. And I walked away thinking, "Dale, don't ever do that again. That's pretty immature and pretty rude." So that was a good lesson.

CP: Yeah. Did you meet Charles Parker?

DS: Oh yeah. Oh yeah, I met Charles Parker. He would come out to the job in his Cadillac. He had a white Cadillac, and we were up in Mount Hood, Sandy, and that country up there, and he'd come up all those little roads and [motor noise] drive around, and get out and he'd have a—he didn't wear a tie, I don't think. But he'd have nice slacks and suit. He was a cool guy. And he'd come over and shake your hand, and this and that. "Mr. Parker." But we were, I mean, we were making good money, and we were doing good physical work, building those towers. I didn't like the idea of destroying the woods, but how am I going to stop Bonneville Power Administration? But he was a really great guy, and we were indebted because we had a job. I mean, this was year after year.

CP: Would you live at the campsite during this work?

DS: Right. Yeah, we would—oh, my gosh, we would live anywhere we could throw a sleeping bag. Sometimes we had an apartment. We'd have an apartment with about six of us in there in Sandy for a while, which was a chaotic mess. Not the best of housekeepers. And then sometimes we'd live in a gravel pit, and just lay our sleeping bags out, and then if it rained we'd put a tarp over us. So, different jobs demanded different locations, and I continued working on that for about six years, you know, in summer time, but it was a great opportunity to physically work. And I started climbing those towers after the first year, so I got to be a lineman; not a journeyman lineman, mind you, just a regular. But that was fun. [1:09:58]

And then one job, right out of the John Day Dam, the power lines go up really steep, and there was a dead-end tower up here which was reinforced steel, because the angle of the cables have to change and go that way, so they have to stabilize that with a heavier steel tower. Well, I'm kind of naïve. We come up out of Rufus and we get up on the wheat fields and the flats. I'm generally always the first one out, and I'm up the tower with my belt. Well, this time I get there, and all of a sudden this guy beats me up a tower. And I think, "That's strange. Why in the hell is he in such a hurry?" As soon as I got up the tower, I figured, this is a dead-end tower, or an angle tower.

He grabbed the three phases that were going over the flatland, to work on, A, B, C. So that meant I had to take—because I was second up the tower, I had to take the ones that were going down to the Columbia River down by the John Day Dam. And they were at an angle like this. And there's nothing below you but six, seven, eight hundred feet. Maybe not that high. Man, it looks like miles down there! And I've got to get this ladder out, a 16-foot ladder, aluminum ladder, maybe 20-foot, out there, so I can climb out on that ladder, just belted onto the cable to put on these dampeners, these big weights out there that look like dumbbells, to keep the line from vibrating in the wind. You talk about scared! [Laughs]

And he's sitting over there laughing like a son of a gun. But he knew; he was a journeyman lineman. He knew that was a dead-end tower, so he grabbed the easiest spot and left me with the bad one. He was done with all three of his phases that he had to work on. I was about one—a half-time done. And every time I go past that tower, I look up there and think, "Oh boy, I got an education there!" [Laughs] That was funny. But, yeah, we had good times working on that.

CP: Well, tell me about your second season of cross country and track.

DS: Disappointing. I was very, very strong. I had come back from Alaska, British Columbia; I'd been working up there. My weight was, oh, about 162. I had really bulked up and muscled up, and I had been doing a lot of—I never did do weights, but I did a lot of pushups, pull-ups, and I was just maturing, I guess. I don't know. Backpacking, I did a lot of backpacking. Well, to be honest with you, I'm not going to be able to give you very much on that, because I'm not very

—I didn't remember some of that stuff, because it was not very comfortable. I ran some races. I won some races. Didn't perform well in the NCAA. Yeah, my career was starting to wane a bit, emotionally.

CP: So, you were starting to feel this urge to move in a different direction?

DS: Yes, sir. Yeah, and it was terrible. I mean, it was like I didn't want it, because I—and then there was humiliation, because here I had been a fairly decent athlete, and now all of a sudden things weren't progressing like you would like to have them. They were getting better, but not that much better. And then it was ups and downs. And as a matter of fact, I look at my scrap book; I didn't even keep a lot of those clippings, because I thought, "Why keep this clipping? I'm not proud of it." You know? So that was pretty humiliating. And actually, God, I should tell you one story, but I don't know if I should do this on camera. Do you want me to tell you?

CP: It's up to you.

DS: I threw a race one time. I tried to make it look real, but I couldn't fool anybody. I couldn't fool coach. We were going back east. This was afterwards, and I had the fastest time in the United States for the 5,000 meters. And I think we were running Philadelphia. And it was qualification for the AAU Championships, and they were going to take the top two to the U.S.-Russian Team Duel, because we were dueling the Russians then, for ideology. And then there was the next, 3rd, 4th and 5th, I think it was, the next four. They went on the European tour to go to England, Poland, Finland, Germany, and run races during the summer time.

Well, during the summer time, guess where I wanted to go? [Mouth pop] British Columbia, kayaking, hunting, fishing. And I theorized, well, I'm paid the scholarship to run at OSU, for cross country and track, and I ran both of them. But to run during the summer time? I mean, it's like being a slave, and I don't want to do it. [1:14:59] And I had this tremendous urge to go north, and I threw the race. But I tried to make—coach knew. I started my kick late, which I never did before, usually—well, never except when I was in high school. And I was farther back in the lead than I normally ever was. I was always in either 1st, 2nd or 3rd, and right, close contact, because that was critical. But I did not want to go to New York City; that would be like going to prison. And I did not want to go overseas.

Now, that was probably pretty stupid. And coach was so ticked off that he gave me my ticket for the airplane, to fly back to Oregon, and never said a word. And so that was embarrassing. I didn't tell very many people that. The only reason I can tell you that now is because I have come to grips with who I am in my age, 72, and where I came from. And I'm not very proud of it, but I'm not really afraid to admit that I screwed up and blew it, you know.

And that's what I told coach. I apologized to him just three days—three weeks ago, that I didn't really—I wished I would have been able to give him more productivity as an athlete. And he accepted it. He said, "That's all right." Well, number one, we can't change it. But if you tell those stories, maybe the next person can learn from them and say, "Wow, here's a guy who did that and it didn't work for him. Maybe I'd better not do that." I don't know.

CP: So you were wrestling with this urge to move in a different direction with your life, and you ultimately made the decision to stop running for OSU.

DS: Yeah, after I graduated. Yeah.

CP: After you graduated?

DS: Yeah. Yeah, I ran all the way up until I graduated.

CP: Okay.

DS: And then I started to train for the Olympics here. Tracy Smith, who was a runner after me, came here and was a good runner, and he was wanting to go for the Olympics, and so I was training. And I was training kind of in the, I don't know why, but the steeplechase area. I don't know why I was entertaining that. And one day I came home and told my wife, I said, "Hey, I'm fooling myself. This is not me. I'm running well, I'm strong, but I just don't have the desire. It's not animalistic. It's not focused enough."

Now, that was disappointing. Let me tell you, I fought with that for a long time in my head, 'til I was, oh, 35 years old or so. Maybe, yeah, 35. Finally came to the realization, "Well Dale, you know what you did? You did the best job you could do at the time. You didn't purposely drop out. Why would anybody do that?" You know.

CP: So I was a little confused about this. I thought you that you still had some time at OSU, or eligibility at OSU, but those two years—

DS: I don't believe I did.

CP: Okay.

DS: But you're younger and sharper than I am. Maybe I did; I don't know.

CP: You did come back at some point for further education.

DS: Oh, oh, that was—oh, right. See, I graduated in Fish and Game, and then I came back to get my degree, qualifications, for a teaching certificate. So I was just, no, I think I had two degrees, but anyway, in education and fish and game. Yeah, but I didn't run then.

CP: Were there any competitors that you remember as being a nemesis, or was it, like, were there any competitions with U of O, perhaps, that you remember, or any sort of rivalry?

DS: Well, yeah, the big one was Keith Forman, who is a wonderful guy. He was a great athlete and very, very—sportsmanship, demonstrated a lot of sportsmanship. Sometimes the University of Oregon Ducks were just a little bit arrogant and cocky, according to me and some of my teammates. But then again, maybe like Muhammad Ali, maybe it was a strategy. You know, if I appear to be tougher through arrogance, then you may be afraid of me, and I don't even have to prove myself. You've just automatically given me the first place. I don't know; that could be. I didn't try to do that. I just tried to do it on the track. I didn't talk about it a lot. Then Keith Forman, that's why I admired him so much, because he was not a big boaster and talker.

Now, some of the other people were. I'm not going to name names, and some of them were definitely better than I was, but he and I one time battled it out on the track area, the cinder track. [1:20:01] And we literally passed each other in—it was either the two or the three mile; I can't remember which one—four times in the last lap. I mean, the audience got their money's worth. And it was just [makes wind noise] he'd pass me, and I'd pass—I finally won, but he was a tough competitor. And that was kind of a neat match.

But if I can entertain you for a minute, I've got to tell you a funny story. Now, this is funny, if you don't mind. This is not funny for me. [Laughs] This is embarrassing to me, but it is funny. We're running a duel meet at Oregon State, and back in those days, we used to beat—I mean, excuse me, we were running a duel meet against Oregon. We used to beat Oregon State. And Jan Underwood, my buddy, was anchoring the mile relay, and we had to win that. And we would get the baton invariably behind. He would always pick it up and win, every time. Incredibly tough!

Well anyway, on one of these meets, not that one, one of these meets, I'm running the two mile, and I'm in the lead, and the sign comes up, "Two." Two laps to go. And I look at that, and I'm real visual, but I also have pretty good hearing. And I'm hearing the crowd just going, "One more to go. One more to go." And it's huge numbers of people. And I'm trying to figure out, what the hell? And I'm thinking, "Okay, I saw two. They're saying one. There's more of them up there. I'm using that damn logic again, you see. There's more of those people up there. They must be right."

So I take off. And I'm barefooted, on that center track. And I run a 50, what the hell, I ran a 55-point-something on that last lap in the two mile. And I get there to cross the tape, there's no damn tape. They guy's standing with a gun there going [imitates starting pistol] and there's a sign saying "One to go." And I thought, "What the heck?" And I've kind of spent my energy reserve, plus my feet are absolutely burning. They're on fire. So I pull off onto the grass and I drop out. [Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh] Three University of Oregon runners go running past me. I don't win the race; I don't even get anywhere.

What it was was, these were the University of Oregon fans in the stand, yelling to their three ducks that there was one more to go. Well, the one more to go was the Beaver who was in front. That was me, and they were telling those guys

there was one more to pass. And I didn't know that, and they didn't tell me. How rude of them? They should have said, "Hey Dale," you know, "You've got two laps to go, but we want this guy to pass," and they didn't say a damn thing. And that was humiliating! And then what really hurt is I come back to watch a track meet about 10 years later, and some yahoo is in the stands, and he says, "Hey Story, when are you going to run the last lap?"

CP: [Laughs]

DS: [Laughs] So, you see how funny—see, you laughed. That was funny, but that's kind of humiliating. But I did have a pretty damn good—Bill Ropes was the trainer here. He's passed on now, but he was a funny guy, but he went in there and he removed 60-some CCs of blood from the blisters on my feet from that track that day, because it was a warm day and I just, I was really running quite fast on that, and the cinders, I got huge blisters. I mean, some of them were that big, you know. And he took a syringe in there and pulled that blood out, and so I was laid up for a couple of days there. Yeah, that was funny.

CP: Any memories of running at Heyward Field?

DS: Yeah, yeah. Well, good memories or bad memories?

CP: Either one.

DS: Yeah, well, let's see, cross country, I had a lot of good memories there. Jiminy, I'm not really going to be able to tell you too many good memories. I'm going to have to tell you a bad one. Maybe this interview shouldn't have taken place. We're getting several bad memories here. I was just telling Kelly Sullivan down there today, this morning. It was one of those days when things just seemed right, but they weren't right. I'm running, it's either two or three mile; I get confused. And I'm in the lead, and I've got the fastest time in the United States. And I'm in the lead and I'm feeling—I'm not arrogant or cocky, or anything, I mean; I want you to know this—but I'm coming around, and I'm in good command. I'm starting the last lap, which was normally my hard surge, and I'm in control.

And all of the sudden at the top of the curve, the crowd is going ecstatic. And I feel something coming [1:25:00], and I'm relaxed and I'm in control, and here comes Kenny Moore. And everything in my power, I could not hold him off. I could not figure that out, and he passed me just coming off the curve. And I thought, "What in the world is this all about?" But anyway, I tried to hold on, and all of the sudden at the very last, I don't know, three or four or five meters, a guy from England, from Southern Illinois University, passes me right at the tape. And I got done, and I remember walking right in—didn't see it. It was a hot, humid day; I know that. I'm not making excuses; I'm just telling you what it was like. And I walked right into the metal upright that held the officials and the timers. And I walked right into it! Hit my head, banged my head, and I thought, "What? I don't do that. I never do that." And I was in a daze. I didn't pass out or anything.

I just remember, that was not what I had planned that day, and that was the NCAA finals in track. So I ended up third. That was probably the biggest humiliation I've ever had in my track career. And Kenny Moore talked about it in his book. Coach just told me today, Sullivan, he says, "You know, in Kenny Moore's book," about Bowerman, he said, "On that given day," he said, Kenny Moore said, "I was not the best runner. The best runner didn't win that day, but I won that day, but I was not the best runner." And I thought he was referring to me, which—and I met Kenny later on, several years later. He actually gave me a book. He gave me a book. That was pretty nice of him. But that was a pretty heavy blow.

But then I look back on it now, and I looked back on it, oh, 20 years ago, and I thought, "Well, what the heck? You were born, you did this, you got over polio. You got through college. You were a runner, you were decent. You got a job, you got married, you had kids. What the hell more do you want? I mean, isn't that good enough?" You know? And you didn't get to the Olympics. Kenny Moore went to the Olympics, but he didn't win a gold medal, so he probably has some disappointment. And so you look at a man's trail in life, and it's got ups and it's got downs. And I think you measure, maybe measure people by how they get out of that down time and try to get back up again. I don't know. I don't know what—

CP: Did you ever meet Prefontaine?

DS: Well, yeah, kind of indirectly. He won the state championship at Willamette University when my kid Jeff Oveson won, and my team won, 1970. And I saw him run there, and it was incredible. I mean, he was like 220 yards ahead of

everybody, and they hadn't even finished yet. He was an incredible runner. Didn't have the best—I mean, he was, he was kind of arrogant, I thought, myself. But then, that's my opinion. But I began to learn to respect him because of what he did. I mean, he was a magnificent runner. It's a shame that he got killed, but. I don't believe I met him. I might have, but I don't remember meeting him on the track. I wasn't running against him, of course. My career was over. I watched him run several times and was really enamored by his strength and that. But what a loss, because he was a pretty good kid.

CP: Did you have time for social life in college?

DS: [Laughs]

CP: Between running and the wild?

DS: No, not really. You've got to remember, I was a very insecure, inferiority complex guy. I was afraid of girls. Oh, I dated a little bit, but not much. No, I was basically, well, I dated some. But no, my social life was running with a group, and we lived in Cinder City, which was an old girls' sorority that had been emptied of women, of course. And we rented that, and had a house—got a house mother had and a track house. It was right across from the Engineering Building over here on Monroe Street. And lived in that. That was kind of a wild bunch, let me tell you. [Whistles] Ooh, my gosh, I could tell you some stories there. Yeah, I could tell you some heavy stories. Oh, man! [Laughs] And true, too. I don't know if I should do that.

CP: [Laughs]

DS: Yeah, one time some guys—there was a light there. [1:30:01] Now, we had some guys in there that weren't track men. They were friends of track men, and they got to stay in the—we had about 22 people. And there was a flashing light out there by the laundromat, going on and off, on and off. And this guy didn't like it, and there was a bit of drinking there, not by me and my buddies, but some of the guys. So this guy comes in my room to get a gun. Well, a lot of us were hunters, and I said, "Hey, you get the heck out of my room. You're not going to get my stuff." So he goes in another room and he gets a 40 caliber rifle, and he sticks it out the window, and he goes, "Click." So he puts it up and he gets a 22, and he goes [imitates gun going off twice], and shoots this sign up.

Pretty soon the police are over there, looking up through the holes, and they point to our window. Doesn't look good. So man, we get all of our stuff out of the house, kayaks, guns. Police come over, "Some shots they are pointing to, they came out of that window." "Oh, it must have been this group over here. We don't know anything." Anyway, we didn't get caught. Oh, I didn't do it, keep in mind, somebody else, and I know who did it. And I says, "Hey man, turn the guy in. Shooting a gun, and defacing property? Somebody could have gotten hurt." But we survived that deal. [Relieved whistle] But yeah, well, you know college kids. And then one time we went down, I remember, I had to go—because I was on scholarship, I had to join the ROTC. And I wasn't excited about that. Anyway, I didn't like a whole lot of authority.

CP: You were required to join because you were on scholarship?

DS: Oh, yeah. Yeah, it's a Land Grant college, and so they had ROTC, and because you were on scholarship, you had to join. So, for one year, I think it was. So I'm in uniform and everything. But anyway, I skipped a drill practice one time, and we went down to Monroe, Oregon, and we were going rattlesnake hunting. There's a den of rattlesnakes down there, several dens, and we were catching live rattlesnakes. And so I had to tell them why I missed.

The officer asked me, he said, "Well, why did you miss, Private Story?" Whatever they call you; I don't know, may have been private. "Why didn't you show up?" I says, "Rattlesnake hunting, sir." He said, "What?" I said, "Rattlesnake hunting, sir." [Laughs] Anyway, I had to make up the drill. And we brought the snakes back. We had about 14 of them, and they're Pacific rattlesnakes, which they don't get real, real big, but they were, some of them were 28, 27, 28 inches long. But still, you know, bad, and we brought them and we emptied about six of them out on the grass over here on Monroe Street. And then we had sticks, and they'd try to crawl away, we'd kick them back. Well, people are walking down the sidewalk and seeing this, and it doesn't take long for them to figure out, "Hey, that's a rattlesnake!" [Imitates aggressive rattle] And here the cops come. "Hey you kids! What the hell are you doing? Get those dang things out of here." They were going to write us a ticket, so we had to take those up. But we did stuff like that.

CP: Yeah. [Laughs]

DS: And that was Cliff Thompson I was telling you about, and Norm Vones [?] and some of the boys. We did a lot of outdoor stuff and, yeah, it was a lot of fun.

CP: So, how did you wind up in Wallowa?

DS: I went hunting over there one time. My buddy that graduated from Fish and Game with me, he had a job over there and he invited me over to go hunting, bow and arrow hunting. And I killed an elk over here on the coast, my first elk with a bow, and I was just excited about that. Because I had been rifle hunting, but now I'm bow and arrow. So I go over there, and I wake up one morning—I drove over there at night and I wake up, and I'm looking up Alder Slope on the Wallowa Mountains, and I'm thinking, "Oh, my gosh!" I saw the beautiful trees, large trees, and pure yellow colors, and fall colors, and I said, "I'm coming back here. I'm coming back here."

So I immediately after the hunt—killed an elk with a bow up there—and after the hunt I came back, and I immediately went in and I started writing applications to the different schools: Elgin, Joseph Enterprise, Wallowa, Pine Eagle, and got the job there. And what was ironic is Amos Marsh, who ran—he was a track, played football, and Frank Marsh played here, and they went to Wallowa. And so I end up at the same school that they were, and Amos Marsh was the team captain on the track team, a sprinter. And then I end up teaching the Oveson boys, whose daughter is now back here, Haley, and graduated last year, or two years ago.

So what a small world! I mean, just, connections are back and forth. Jeff called us on the phone when we were down there; just two hours ago we were talking. [1:35:02] He wanted to be there, because his dad and Andy Landforce were good buddies, and he held the kids when they were babies. So, what a connection. Yeah.

CP: You taught biology, and you coached track?

DS: Yeah, I taught biology. That was my main goal, just because wildlife biology—wildlife biologist and biology are very similar. And then I started the second forestry program in the state of Oregon, because I saw the need for teaching kids about—and I was just beginning to take some forestry classes. I liked to work in the woods, and I went to falling timber in the woods, and so I thought, "Well, I'll get in a class." The class was Natural Resources Conservation; I taught—fisheries, wildlife, forestry, soils, and a little bit of hydrology to educate kids, and I ended up having that project for, well, the whole time I was there.

I got a deal with Boise Cascade and leased the hill just south, a quarter mile from town, had 36 acres of timber, my outdoor laboratory. So my kids would fall timber, they would plant timber. They would clean, you know, bump the limbs, cut the logs up. I even had some of them skid, occasionally. And then I get the fathers to load the logs on their trucks, haul them to the mill, and Boise Cascade would pay me a stumpage price. And I made \$69,000 out of that, in the '70s and '80s. So then I used that money to give scholarships to kids, which I was pretty proud of, and I gave quite a bit of money to those kids over the years, and then bought all of our equipment, then we took field trips. We would come down here every year, and go to the OSU Forestry Research Center out here. And down to Eugene, and balloon logging, and all of those things.

So I taught that, and then biology, and then advanced biology, and then I would take the kids on a lot of trips—a four-day trip to Oregon Health Sciences University, and the Oregon Primate Center, and the Oregon State Police Forensics Laboratory, and then a biotechnology corporation out of Beaverton, trying to get kids to say, "Hey, we educate here, but here's how we use it. Here's how we put it to use." And it was really fun.

CP: Good exposure for kids who live in a very rural area.

DS: Oh, and that is precisely one of the reasons why I did it. I said, "These kids are never going to see that!" I mean, this logging, which I love, and ranching, but they're not going to see the technical side, and after all, that's important. So I wanted to expose them to—hands on is what I thought was important, to get them there to see how much. And University of Oregon, I mean the Health Sciences University, got them in operations, on three different operations: ear surgery, gall bladder, and knee replacement. They wouldn't let me in, but they would let the kids in. The kids sat from me to you, watching the operation. No, I was excited. I tell you, as a teacher, I really loved teaching. I got as excited as the kids, you know. And that's what was fun, is I was able to maintain that degree of enthusiasm for 30 years, and that was

important to me. And maybe it was important because I didn't have all of that enthusiasm in track in the end, so maybe I was compensating. I don't know; I have no idea. But it was fun.

CP: You mentioned you wound up coaching track sort of by accident.

DS: Yeah, when you got there, and I'm quite convinced that I was hired because I was a college graduate, and then I also ran track/cross country and did fairly well. So they had to have said, "Well this guy's diversified; he's done this and this, so maybe he's a better candidate." But in those days it was easier to get a job, too. So I sat on the couch one day in this house I was at, and I turned to my boss, two of them, they were prospective bosses, and I said, "Gentlemen, what's my competition?" [Laughs] And they looked at each other and said, "Well, as far as we're concerned, you're hired." I mean, that's how easy it was back then. Couldn't even spell the word resume. We didn't have them, you know, applications.

And what was really embarrassing? I took my bow and arrow over there, and I'm out in the field between the house, the tutorage house, and the school, and this is in Lostine, Oregon. And there's a grass field, and I'm showing these guys; I'm kind of demonstrative. And I say, "Hey, let me show you how high these babies shoot." And I had a broadhead. So I take this baby and I cant it, and I've got it back here, and I'm shooting a recurved bow. And I think, for safety purposes, I'd better cant a few degrees so it doesn't come back down on their head, so I shift it over here. [1:40:02] I didn't pay any attention to what was over here. [Makes wind noise] I let go, and it goes up out of sight. It comes back [makes landing noise], sticks in the roof of the schoolhouse. Broadhead.

Now, I'm interviewing for a job at that school, and I just stuck it with an arrow! [Laughs] And I says, "Whoops, I didn't mean to do that." That arrow stood up there for about two years before we got it down. And they hired me. So that tells you, they must have been desperate or something. But I stayed there for 30 years, and I built a good program, and landscaped all of the school, paid for all of that. I really enjoyed being there, and.

CP: How about your coaching career?

DS: Oh, the coaching, yeah. So, when I came there, they said, "Well, you're going to coach." I says, "I don't know how to coach. I've never had a coaching class in my life." He said, "It doesn't matter. You were an athlete; you're coaching." Okay. So junior high, the first year I did junior high, because the next year they opened up the high school for biology, which I was the job I wanted. So I did a little bit of basketball; didn't know what the hell the top of the basketball or the bottom of the basketball was at that time. Maybe there isn't a difference, I don't know. And we won the league championship. It wasn't because of me. Kids would get together in a huddle and I'd say, "Hey, you guys are doing good. Keep it up." That's about all I could say.

And then I got in track and cross country, and then I just loved it! And we won two state championships in cross country, and we were up in the top five year after year, after year. And then I had seven—I was assistant coach on two state championships, and then the head coach on five, and so theoretically I was in on seven, but had five. And that was the first time anybody had ever won five consecutive championships in a row. And I did that with different kids. Didn't have the same kids each time.

CP: In track?

DS: Track, track, track. That was thrilling. And of course it was a Single-A school, mind you. Ended up with—I figured it out one time—32 state champions, which, that was my goal. It wasn't to win state championships, I just wanted to take individuals and say, "Hey, how good can you be? Can you be this good?" And to me that was my goal.

CP: So what sort of a philosophy did you develop as a coach, in terms of developing the state champions?

DS: Well, one thing is I never wanted to take advantage of my athletes and use them for my own ego trip, because I told them, I said, "I've already had my 15 minutes of glory. So, I'm not going to do anything that will put you—it's your choice what you want to do, and in the end, what event you want to do. I'm not going to put you in three events, and force you to do them. I want you to tell me what you want to do. And if you just want to run this, fine." Now, if we've got a real strong team, I might put a little pressure on them, and say, "Hey, we could win the state championship, because we've got so-and-so and so-and-so. Have you thought about this? Would you do this for the team?" And usually it would happen, because they would all want to please the team.

Mental—the mental part was by biggest thing, because in my opinion, anybody can train the body. It's relatively easy. I mean, it's hard work, but it's easy. But the mind is the part that controls the body. And if you can control the mind to build confidence, sportsmanship, all of the other things, but whatever it takes to make an athlete good, which is mainly confidence, realization, attitude, tough, that was my main goal. And a couple of my students told me later, said, "You were a great." What they said was I was a great motivator. But I always tried to take my athletes slowly, and progress them slowly through the season, not get too much in a hurry, just look down here. Here's the focus down here, the state meet. Doesn't matter what happens here, as long as we keep learning and improving, that's the main thing.

Now, other coaches, they would, "Oh, we've got to win this meet. We've got to win this meet. We've got to win this meet." I didn't care. Nobody remembers if you won a duel meet. What they remember is, did you win the state championship? So that was my theory. Mainly it was trying to work with the brain, on attitude. I'd had a couple of psychology courses, but, you know, I think you do that because you feel it inside. I don't know.

I used to think, are teachers made, or are teachers born? And I don't know what the answer to that is, but I never in my life thought I would be a teacher. Never! [1:44:58] And Roger Herbert, the sprinter here on our team, who was in teaching, he got me into teaching just quite by accident. And once I did that, I just found my niche I guess; I don't know. Because it must have been. For 30 years, in once place, and I enjoyed it all of the time. And then from what people said, I did a pretty good job and had success. So I think, "Well then, you must have loved it." You know? And even today, I'll see a school bus and I'll think, "I was a teacher? How in the heck did that happen?" No, I'm serious. Chris, I am absolutely serious. It's unbelievable.

And I'll tell you, when we get done with this interview, I'm going to meet Steve Gauss, my student up in Dayton, who is doing a helicopter logging job right now. He won the state championship in the 880 yard, or 800 meters, and the 1600 relay on our team, in 1996. And he and I are like father and son. And when I was coming up the road today, I was counting up the number of athletes, and mostly athletes, and students that I taught, and I have ten of them that I still run around with as a coach, as a father—I'm not their father, but as a coach and a teacher. And I swear, we are like father and son.

Last night I had dinner with Roy Jackson, who threw the javelin for me at the state meet, but I have ten of those athletes. And I'm not bragging, but I'm just telling you how close we are. The one is the executor of my will, that I'm going to see. He's 37 years old. But he treats me like Sam Bell treated me. He treats me with love and compassion, and he's always there, and he's just stable, really. So I feel real proud. And I put him in the will, and I put two other kids in my will, too. I'm not sure a lot of teachers have done that, and the only reason I'm saying it is that's the kind of relationship we had at Wallowa. So you can see why I loved my job for 30 years. And he fishes with me in Alaska. We go up into Alaska and go fishing together.

CP: Well, you've enjoyed a very active retirement, too, from the sounds of it.

DS: Oh, yeah. Jiminy, I was lucky! I retired at 55. I loved to teach, but I loved to play more than I did teach, so I retired then. Yeah, and I feel sorry for a lot of the kids today, because it's harder. It's going to be harder for kids to retire at 55, and to find a job and stay there for long. But we were blessed; we went through a period of time when there was a stable economy, and you could get jobs, and they didn't unload teachers. Roger and I were just talking about that the other night, how fortunate we are that we were able to get through that.

CP: You're an accomplished bow hunter.

DS: Well, I don't know about accomplished. I hunted for 32 or 33 years with a bow.

CP: Often barefoot?

DS: There was times. Yeah, there was a number of times. Particularly at the last, coming in at the last of the stalk, when it's real critical to be absolutely quiet. Your feet are so quiet. You can wrap your toes around little rocks or sticks, or something that might break, and ease up here and there, and it works. It works, you know? And the terrain is not that tough. I mean, to me. People say, "How do you keep your feet from hurting?" Well, calloused feet are built, and number two, there's grass up there. And there's rocks, but the rocks are about just jagged things. It's not that bad. And you're going

slow. So, if you're going slow and you can see where you put your feet, you're fine. But boy, I'll tell you, it's quiet. So I've killed about three or four bulls, elk, barefoot going into the last 100 yards or so, something like that. But.

CP: Did you also build a home? In Richland?

DS: Yeah, I built a log house. Unfortunately, things have happened since I built it, but I've got to sell it. And so it's for sale now, yeah. I always wanted a log house. I lived in it for 10 years, pretty nice, but circumstances have changed in my life. Well, I was telling you earlier that my youngest son has cancer, and that's been a tough one. But anyway, so yeah. And well, I'm 72 years old. At some point in life, what am I going to do for the rest of my life? So I'm going through that transition right now [1:50:02], trying to figure out, well, what do I do now?

And I can honestly tell you, I'm getting a little less selfish and a little more compassionate when it comes to—I was just talking to—well, I probably shouldn't say that. I was talking to coach today, and I'm leaning to help out the university some in the area of track and field. I've helped out a little bit, but not much. I'm heading in that direction because I think it's important for—well, we talked about that today—for coaches, that what the contribution that coaches give young athletes, and if you can help a young athlete to avoid alcohol, to avoid drugs, to avoid problems, and to try to take their life and head it in the right direction, that's a monumental thing. And I didn't realize that until probably the last 20 or 30 years. And so, I'm trying to make a better effort to do that. You know?

CP: Well, that sort of feeds in on towards my last question for you, thoughts on the impact that OSU has had on your life.

DS: Oh, tremendously. I can tell you one thing right now, had I not had—that point I talked to you about, running away from home—had I not had that counselor steer me in the right direction, had I not been somewhat successful where I got a scholarship, I was not college material. Let me tell you. And then I had people that had faith and trust in me. You know, God, I've got to tell you, I was so poor in mathematics, they had a tutor for me in algebra here at Oregon State. I'm not proud of that, but anyway I got through it okay. But I had people have faith and confidence in me.

And Sam Bell, he bent over backwards. I was not the easiest kid to coach. I was just a kind of independent thinker. If somebody said, "Jump," I used to say, "How high?," but then I'd say, "Why? Why do you want me to jump? How come this guy doesn't jump?" You know what I mean? I was for a little bit of fairness and equality, and that got me in a little hot water. So Oregon State—and I've told people this over, and over, and over—had I not been able to get that help here, through a scholarship, and help in the flexibility—the professors were great about helping me. And they were always interested in my—not only interested in my running; not all of them but most of them—they were interested in me as a person, too.

And I kind of walked away—Jay Long, Lee Kuhn in the Fish and Game Department, Howard Horton, Doc Storm in the mammalogy, or Zoology Department, great, great guy and I think he's passed on now, I'm not sure. Robert Storm. But I visited him several times out here. Those people, and whoever was responsible for writing that letter telling me to get my butt off the kayak and start studying. And you've got to think, I don't know who those people were, but there was some lady in the office that said, "Hey, you're screwing up, buddy." So, one has took back and say, "Thanks for that, because that was a great contribution."

And Oregon State I think has got a fantastic reputation, a beautiful campus, conservative, which, I mean, I'm only looking back on it now and saying conservative, and I kind of like those. And the community, Corvallis, then was conservative, certainly probably more liberal now. But I didn't go to other universities so I can't really compare, other than what I heard. There was far too few females here, far too few—far fewer females than there was at the University of Oregon, and let me tell you, a lot of us gentlemen suffered from that back in the '60s. I mean, there was two or three guys for every girl. Yeah, I'm serious.

Fortunately, I wasn't desirable for a date, so anyway. I used to run around my, I used to run around in a little white pair of silk shorts, and I'd run down here to lower campus and I'd train there quite a bit, and I'd run past, I think it was West Hall—not West Hall, Snell Hall. And the girls would be up there, and they'd look out, and it would be Sunday morning, or whatever, and it would be rainy, and all I've got on was these running shorts, barefooted, no shirt, and for a while, they called me the Greek god. And I was so disappointed, because in all of that time, I never had any of them come down to worship me, or anything. They just, "He was the Greek god, big deal." [Laughs]

But that was funny. I had a good time here, a really good time, and a lot of neat people. And I do appreciate you and the rest of the whoever selected me to be a part of this history program. I hope I haven't bored you to death.

CP: Not at all. A lot of fun.

DS: Yeah. Well, it has been for me too, and it's an honor I appreciate.

CP: Good. Thank you.

DS: You bet. [1:55:16]