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PRESS RELEASE

USTFCCCA Announces the Inception of The Bowerman

The Bowerman will honor the most outstanding collegiate men's and women's track and field athlete annually

EUGENE, Ore., June 26, 2009 – The U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA) announces the creation of an esteemed award, The Bowerman. This award will annually recognize the most outstanding collegiate men's and women's track and field athlete.

The inaugural award will recognize the 2009 winners of The Bowerman. The announcement and presentation of the inaugural award will be held in conjunction with the 2009 USTFCCCA Convention. The convention will be held at the JW Marriott Grande Lakes in Orlando, Florida from December 14th through 17th, 2009.

The Bowerman is named in honor of track and field pioneer Bill Bowerman, who served the sport of track and field in numerous ways, including his leadership in the USTFCCCA predecessor organization the National Collegiate Track Coaches Association, and his contributions to NCAA track and field and the running community as a whole.

"Our family is greatly honored by this distinguished award that gives recognition to a student-athlete for their abilities and performance in track and field," said Barbara Bowerman, wife of the late Bill Bowerman. "Bill always felt that the achievements of the athletes on the athletic fields should be recognized in a most meaningful way."

Bowerman's legacy in track and field is undeniable. He began his illustrious and famed career in Eugene as a University of Oregon quarter-miler under Hall of Fame Coach Bill Hayward. One year after Hayward's retirement, Bowerman took over the Oregon track and field program, and led the Ducks to unprecedented success over the next 23 years. Bowerman served as Oregon's head track and field coach from 1949-1972. He remained active at the University and in the Eugene community even as Nike®, the company he cofounded, grew into a global sports giant.

"He [Bowerman] enjoyed and appreciated the recognition of athletes who received The Heisman Trophy [in collegiate football], and felt it was a great honor for those who received it. Bill would be so pleased to have this award carry his name," added Mrs. Bowerman.

The Bowerman will be designed by former Oregon and Bowerman-coached track and field student-athlete Tinker Hatfield, now the overseer of Nike's® "Innovation Kitchen". Hatfield is perhaps best known as the designer of the Air Max I and of 13 of the iconic line of Air Jordan shoes.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, JUNE 26, 2009

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“When you think of Bill Bowerman, you think of excellence, you think of longevity, you think of a love of the sport and of a certain ethic toward the sport,” said USTFCCCA President Pat Henry. “To create an award in his name is to honor the brilliant legacy that Bowerman built in track & field.”

About the Selection Process

For the inaugural award, a 12-person Bowerman Advisory Board will select three male and three female finalists who will be invited to Orlando for the announcement and presentation of The Bowerman winner.

Following the selection of the finalists, a nationally representative group accounting for 100 votes, to be known collectively as The Bowerman Voters, will determine the winner of the The Bowerman.

Beginning in 2010, the Bowerman Advisory Board will maintain a “Bowerman Watch List” throughout the collegiate track and field seasons. At a specified time (to be determined), the Bowerman Advisory Board will select 15 semi-finalists in each gender for The Bowerman.

From the list of semi-finalists, The Bowerman Voters will vote for their top three selections in each gender. The top three vote-getters overall in each gender will be invited to that year’s presentation of The Bowerman. An independent firm will tabulate the votes for The Bowerman.

About the USTFCCCA

The U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA) is the non-profit professional organization that represents men's and women's cross country and track and field coaches in the United States. The organization represents over 8,000 coaching members, including 91% of NCAA track and field coaches. USTFCCCA serves as an advocate for cross country and track and field coaches, providing a leadership structure to assist the needs of a diverse membership, serving as a lobbyist for coaches' interests, and working as a liaison between the various stakeholders in the sports of cross country and track and field.

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Bill Bowerman Bio

Bill Bowerman's legacy in track and field is undeniable. He served as the University of Oregon's head track and field coach from 1949-72 and remained active at the University and in the coaching world even as the shoe company he cofounded, Nike®, grew into a global sports giant.

Bowerman was born in Portland, Oregon and graduated from Medford High School before attending the University of Oregon. At Oregon, he played basketball and football and joined Bill Hayward's Ducks as a quarter-miler. After graduation in 1934, he began his coaching career at the high school level, first in Portland and then as the head football and track and field coach at Medford. He continued to coach at the high school level until 1948, with an interruption while he served in the Army during World War II.

In 1948, Bowerman returned to his alma mater, and a year later, with Hayward retiring, Oregon hired him as the head track and field and cross country coach. Over the next 23 years, the Ducks experienced new levels of success, winning four national team titles and finishing twice as runner-up. Individually, Bowerman's athletes were equally successful; he coached 24 NCAA individual champs, 33 Olympians, 64 All-Americans, and athletes who have achieved 13 world records and 23 American records. Among his Olympians were Gold Medalist Otis Davis, Dyrrol Burleson, Jim Grelle, Bronze Medalist Bill Dellinger, Ken Moore, Wade Bell, and Steve Prefontaine.

Bowerman's contributions extend far beyond the University of Oregon. Bowerman served as the National Collegiate Track Coaches Association's (NCTCA) vice president in 1958-59 and took the helm of the organization as its president in 1959-60. The NCTCA is one of several predecessor organizations that now form the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA).

The timing of Bowerman's NCTCA leadership could not have been more significant, as tension between NCTCA coaches and the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) came to a head in 1960-61. In response to the concerns of NCTCA coaches over the operating practices of the AAU, Bowerman was one of the primary leaders in the formation of the United States Track and Field Federation, which was the first step in establishing the system of autonomous federations to control individual sports in the United States that exists today.

Bowerman also served as head track and field coach for the 1972 Olympic Team and played a leading role in Eugene's successful bids to host the 1972, 1976, and 1980 Olympic trials.

Bowerman also helped inspire the jogging boom in the U.S. in the 1970s. During a trip to New Zealand in the 1960s with the Oregon track team, Bowerman witnessed the jogging boom in that country, which led him to write a book on jogging and to start a jogging/running club in Eugene. As the cofounder of Nike®, Bowerman also achieved international recognition. He famously invented the waffle sole by pouring rubber on his wife's waffle iron.

Although Bowerman's tenure at Oregon is long over, his impact on the University, on track and field, and on the global sports arena continues to be felt. For his numerous contributions to the sport of track and field and to the profession of track and field coaching, Bowerman was an inaugural inductee into the USTFCCCA Hall of Fame in 1995.