

Former Clemson track coach Bob Pollock dead at 60

By Greg Wallace, February 20, 2010

Sad news that broke today after Clemson's 72-49 dismantling of Virginia... former track coach Bob Pollock died after a short battle with lung cancer. Pollock led Clemson to 21 ACC titles in 20 years, but the end of his career was marred by allegations that he deposited money from on-campus Clemson track events into a personal account.

He and assistant coach Charles Foster were investigated by SLED after accusations they deposited more than \$27,000 in personal accounts. Prosecutors said there was not enough evidence to bring charges.

Still, his career was remarkable in its own right, and it should be remembered that way.

The Clemson release on his death follows:

Bob Pollock, who led Clemson to 21 ACC Championships in his 20 years as head coach of the school's track program, died Saturday in Lexington, KY. He had been diagnosed with lung cancer last August. He was 60 years old.

Arrangements will be announced later.

Pollock established department wide Clemson coaching records for ACC Championships (21), ACC Coach of the Year selections (19) and NCAA Regional Coach of the Year selections (16 times). He coached the men's indoor track team to 11 top 20 finishes and the men's outdoor program to 10 top 20 seasons. Seven of the indoor track national finishes were top 10s.

In 20 seasons under Pollock between 1988- 2008, Clemson won 11 indoor ACC titles, nine outdoor and one cross country title. His indoor teams won every ACC crown from 1989-93, then from 1997-2002. He led the Tigers to outdoor conference titles in each of his first three seasons. In cross country, Pollock's 1988 team won the league championship and finished fourth at the NCAA national meet.

Pollock was National Coach-of-the-Year indoors in 1992 after leading Clemson to a national runner-up team finish, best in program history. He was named ACC Coach-of-the-Year 19 times, including the 2008 outdoor season when he guided the Tigers

to a runner-up finish at the conference meet. He was named Region Coach-of-the-Year 16 times, most recently for the 2007 indoor season.

Pollock coached athletes who won 13 national champions during his time at Clemson, including 10 indoors. Travis Padgett was Clemson's most recent NCAA champion under Pollock, claiming the 60m dash crown in 2007. He finished second in the nation at the NCAA Outdoor Championships in the 100 meters as well that year. Michael Green, Shawn Crawford and Ato Modibo all won multiple national championships under Pollock's watch.

Pollock mentored athletes that won nearly 200 All-Americans during his tenure at Clemson, including recent Clemson two-sport athletes Jacoby Ford and C.J. Spiller, who ran for Pollock their first two years with the Clemson track program. Both are slated to be high NFL draft picks this April and their speed has a lot to do with their success on the gridiron. They became the NCAA's all-time all-purpose running duo this past year with 11,671 yards.

"Coach Pollock was an outstanding coach and certainly helped my career in many ways," said Spiller. "He gave me an opportunity and many other athletes an opportunity to be the best they could over the last 20 years. He had such a big impact on the Clemson track program. He certainly had a positive impact on my football career. He taught me a lot about speed and endurance.

"But, just as much, he helped me with the mental aspect of competition. He had the ability to get you focused when getting prepared for a championship. I used that same thought process when I prepared for the ACC football championship this year."

"The thing I will always remember about Coach Pollock was the way he encouraged me, especially when I was trying to come back from injury," said Ford. "He was always there for me and I certainly appreciated that. He stayed with me every step of the way. I would not have gotten through some of the tough times during my career without him."

Former sprinters Crawford and James Trapp combined to earn 21 All-America certificates under Pollock's direction. Clemson had at least one All-American in each of his 20 seasons.

Fourteen student-athletes from Pollock's program went on to compete in the Olympic Games. Two of the athletes, Crawford and Carlton Chambers, won gold medals for their respective countries. Crawford won the 200m dash for the U.S. in the 2004 games, while Chambers was part of Canada's gold medal winning 4x100m relay in Atlanta in 1996.

Success and conference titles were nothing new to Pollock when he came to Clemson. During 14 years as head track and cross country coach at Appalachian State University, Pollock led the Mountaineers to five Southern Conference outdoor titles, four indoor championships and one cross country title. His teams swept the Southern Conference indoor and outdoor meets in 1984, 1985, 1986, and 1987.

The Rochester, NY, native began his coaching career at The Citadel, where he served as head cross country and assistant track coach from 1972-74.

Pollock earned a bachelor's degree in physical education from The Citadel in 1971, and was a four-year letter winner for the Bulldogs as a distance runner. His senior year, he was voted the team MVP as well as team captain. He also earned a master's degree in education from the University of Georgia in 1972.

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