



Steve Shaklee has been involved with athletics most of his life: first as a high school and Division I collegiate athlete, then as a successful high school coach and steadfast supporter.

Shaklee started running back in the early 1970s at Cherry Hill East HS when he was convinced to come out for cross country by a friend in his homeroom. He eventually ran on two South Jersey Group 4 Championship teams under Coach Don Witzig. He continued his running career at Drexel University and graduated in 1978 as the school record holder in the 10,000 Meter Run. After finishing his undergraduate degree, Shaklee ran post-collegiately while doing graduate work at Glassboro State College (Rowan University).

It was during this time that he began volunteer coaching at his high school alma mater under Coaches Don Witzig and Dennis Smyth. He loved it. Shaklee found that helping others achieve success was as satisfying as his own running accomplishments - maybe more so. It did not take long to realize that this was something he wanted to pursue. Shaklee had an immediate impact on the program and, during his time at Cherry Hill East, the team was consistently one of the top squads in South Jersey, winning two South Jersey Group 4 titles in 1984 and 1985 and producing individual standouts including 1981 and 1983 South Jersey Runner of the Year recipients, Bruce Miller and Bill Stewart.

In 1987, Shaklee took a teaching position at Shawnee High School and was named assistant coach for cross country and track. In 1989, he became the head cross country coach. Although he spent only three years in that position, it was a very successful period for the program with two South Jersey Group 4 Championships, a runner-up finish in the Group 4 State Meet and a number one ranking among South Jersey teams. It was also during this time that Shaklee was first voted South Jersey Boys Cross Country Coach of the Year, an honor he would go on to receive four additional times over the course of his career.

In the spring of 1992, the Shawnee boys track team won the Group 4 State Championship and the returning distance squad was loaded for the upcoming cross country season. However, a counseling position became available at Cherokee High School and Shaklee took over the head Cherokee cross country and assistant track positions. That fall, while Shawnee won the SJ Group 4 Sectional Championship and placed second at the Group 4 State Meet, Cherokee finished 10th at sectionals and failed to advance. By the next year, however, Shaklee's Cherokee squad managed to beat Shawnee to win the conference championship. From there things really took off and by 1997, Cherokee won its first state championship.

In his years at Cherokee, Shaklee led the boys cross country team to 22 Burlington County Championships, 22 Conference Championships, 11 South Jersey Group 4 Championships (most ever by a SJ Group 4 team) and 7 Group 4 State Championships (the second most in the history of the Group 4 State Meet). Eight times, his program has earned the number 1 ranking in South Jersey. Since 1995, there have only been five years in which Cherokee has not been one of the top 3 ranked teams in South Jersey. Shaklee's team has also been ranked in the top 10 in the state of New Jersey in 20 of the past 28 years; a consistency matched by very few New Jersey programs in any sport. Individually, Shaklee has coached five cross country state champions, including Marc Pelerin, who won the 2001 Meet of Champions and who is also a South Jersey Hall of Famer. He also has had two Footlocker National Finalists (Pelerin -2001, and Shawn Wilson - 2012).

In track, Shaklee has remained primarily a distance coach and has had great success with his athletes, nine of whom have won state championships. During his brief tenure as Cherokee's head track coach, the team won the South Jersey Group 4 Championship in 2001 and two Olympic Conference American Division Championships in 2004 and 2005.

Shaklee credits much of his success to the outstanding coaches he has worked with, especially Chris Callinan, Jeff Thompson, Mark Jarvis and Bill Shea. He is also quite proud of the Cherokee and Shawnee alumni who have entered the coaching ranks, including current coaches Chris Tarello (St. Joseph's University), Kevin Cuneo (Timber Creek HS), Kevin Schickling (Jackson Memorial HS), Marc Pelerin (Cinnaminson MS) and Mike Zurzolo (Highland HS) and Jack Shea (Haddonfield).

Shaklee retired from Cherokee's counseling department in 2020 but continues at Cherokee as head coach of cross country and assistant in track. In addition to his high school coaching, Shaklee also enjoys working with a few aspiring post-collegiate athletes, including South Jersey alumni Kevin McDonnell, Jimmy Daniels and Mike Iannotta.

Aside from coaching, Shaklee has served the local running community by establishing the Cherokee Challenge in 1996, which has grown to be the largest cross country meet in South Jersey and the second largest in the state. In 1998, with his wife, Cricket Batz and Villanova Coach, Marcus O'Sullivan, Shaklee co-founded RunningWorks Cross Country Camp and the Day of Distance Coaching Clinic which serves athletes and coaches across the country.

Shaklee resides in Oaklyn, NJ with his wife of 34 years. They both still love to run.