

## Interview : Coach Pittman of 3M Track Club

By Alexander Hill (10/01/08)



Coming off an outstanding 2008 campaign which saw 30 junior olympic medalist, 7 National Champions and 1 National record holder The 3M track and field program, which has a long history of youth track and field prominence, may be in the best shape as its ever been. Proving that Love is the one size fit all formula for success, Head Coach William Pittman shares his experience as 3M heads into 2009 for another banner season.

1. With one of the most successful programs in age group track and field 3M has managed to produce numerous National Champions, All-Americans and some National Record Holders. Out of all the accomplishments you have helped your Team achieve, which one stands out in your mind as the proudest moment?

**The proudest moments for the 3M Coaching Staff is when our athletes graduates from high school. Our ultimate ladder of success is measured when members of the 3M family graduate from college. We enjoy Track & Field and recognize the sport as an alternative gateway to higher education for our student/athletes.**

2. Under the tutelage of yourself, Coach Harvey, Coach Casey, Coach Parker and Coach Hammerquist, 3M's program has emerge as one of the better youth track and field programs in the nation. What is it like to work alongside of these guys.?

**It is a dream comes true to work with this talented and dedicated coaching staff. We see ourselves as coaches of a program that is no better, but no worse than any other. As a result these gentlemen prepare yearly workout formulas that are specific to the age group and genders we train. Their presence at the practice site, track meets and preparation time is not compensated. Their skill set and proper communications with youth has had a monumental affect on the programs success. Without them, there would be no 3M Track Club**

3. 3M is well known for producing a great number of throwers, sprinters and hurdlers over the years. Besides their credentials on the track, what else do you look for in a potential student-athlete?

**Every student/athlete within our program is required to excel within their own parameters in school. Not every student will achieve a 4.0 grade point average, but you will never know if you can, if you don't make a valid effort towards this goal.**

**We insist on review of report cards from each student/athlete, each report period. We share this information with their teammates and consequently have seen this tactic inspire greater performances in school. We believe that through peer group pressure, improved self-esteem and visual accomplishment, our athletes acquire strength and success in both sports and academics.**

4. Development of any kind starts at a very early stage and is influenced by teaching and training. For young athletes learning about their sport connects them more to the process. But often people are easily distracted by a false sense of urgency that makes winning more important then development. How do you encourage development in a sport where winning is more fun?

**As a team we encourage members to be patient and to take pride in individual personal achievement. Step by step this will lead to the ultimate individual desired result. Our team primarily consists of Sub-Bantams, Bantams and Midgets. Because of this early age group we allow the athlete to grow and learn at his or her own rate. When the athlete and the coaching staff are in agreement, we prepare them for the next step in this many phase training effort. Many of our athletes are not first to the tape, therefore are not honored at the track meet. As a compensation, each Monday after a track meet our athletes are recognized for the following: "Secret Marks", which takes into account personal achievement, and "Coaches View", which recognizes those for special achievement. Little things like this keep athletes inspired without winning and fosters internal pride.**

5. The continued success of track and field in this country depends on age group track and field and a competitive outlet for others who love to participate in the sport. However youth track at the age group level doesn't attract as many athletes as other sports such as soccer. What kind of steps should be taken, if any, in order to bring attention to this sport?

**Your perception on this matter is accurate. It appears that the current Pacific Association Board is taking positive steps towards addressing this issue. Once we prove to our communities that we are sincere about the betterment of our youth, through positive media communications, club support, and adhered to track meet protocol. As stated previously, it is apparent our current PA board is traveling in the right direction on this matter.**

6. With the persistent patterns of poverty, gang activity, drug abuse and teenage pregnancy in our youth. How would you say that programs such as 3M are important for benefiting the health, education and well-being of young people?

**For all of the matters mentioned above, it is vital that programs exist for youth. Without structured youth venues our student/athletes have only the streets as an educator. I am in support of any youth program not just track & field, because we need to capture the individual interest of those in need of service. My hat goes off to all that share their time, donate their talents towards the positive growth of a child. We must all remember, we are part of a village that assist in the growth of a young adult.**

7. I would imagine disappointments have been many over the years and as coaches it would probably be that we will keep experiencing disappointments for as long as we continue to work with young people who participate in sports. How have you learned to handle disappointments and move forward personally?

**This area is a simple one for me, just take one day at a time and believe that God is the master of outcomes.**

8. What's the best part about being a head coach and leading your student-athletes in the right direction?

**The best part is seeing the success of each participant. It keeps me grounded, remembering that someone had to help me achieve my goals in life.**

9. What is the most difficult part that comes along with being a head coach?

**Without a doubt it is economics. Many student/athletes are financial challenged due to no fault of their own. Unfortunately, this sport is expensive. Oftentimes, the coaching staff will financially support a child, who is sincere and doing well in school, from their personal funds.**

10. For all the younger coaches out there who wish to one day last as long as you have, what is the best piece of advice that you can give them?

**Be in this sport for the development of the child and not for personal benefit. longevity is based on sincerity.**