

Eric Walz History 300 Collection

# Trent Shippen – Basketball Coach at Ricks and BYU-Idaho

By Trent Shippen

March 4, 2004

## Box 4 Folder 31

Oral Interview conducted by Elise Thrap

Transcript copied by Alina Mower    June 2005

Brigham Young University – Idaho

ET: Ok, I am Elise Thrap and it is March 4 2004 and I am interviewing Trent Shippen. First question I have for you is; how long have you been involved in coaching basketball?

TS: Involved in coaching? Since 1990.

ET: 1990.

TS: Thirteen, fourteen years.

ET: And where was your first coaching job at?

TS: A high school job in Fort Collins, Colorado, a Rocky mountain high school. It's while I was doing my student teaching.

ET: Student teaching, alright.

TS: Assistant varsity coach, boys.

ET: Ok. What is your other experience as a basketball coach besides that?

TS: After that I, coached as a graduate assistant at Color... Colorado State University which is my Alma Matter. That's where I did my graduate work under Void Grant, and I... Then I went to the University of Utah and I tried to get on with Rick Mangerus and his program but he was all filled up. I watched a lot of his practices and worked for about a year. And then I came up to Ricks College and coached with Lori Woodland as an assistant women's coach and did that for a year. Then I became an assistant coach under Clyde Nelson with the men's program at Ricks College and did that for a year. And then I became the head women's coach at Ricks College and assistant under Clyde Nelson the next year and did that again one more year after that, and then it was just too much so I had to do women's only. (laughs) So I was only a women's coach my fifth year at Ricks. And then a BYU-Provo job came open and I was the head coach up there for four years and assisted my last year. And then I came up to here a year and a half ago with the activities program and that's where I'm at still. Does that make sense?

ET: Uh, huh.

TS: That's a lot of words.

ET: How did you get your first job when you came up here to Ricks? How did that work?

TS: Actually it was through the admissions office. But uh, my biggest paying salary was with the admissions office. I worked in the admissions office and then Lori Woodland asked me and I inquired of her too about being involved in basketball and she gave me my first opportunity to get on the floor. She also coached my wife Jean, who played for Ricks College. She was coaching here my sophomore year, Lori Woodland was, and my wife was on the women's team. I was on the men's team. That's how we met.

ET: Oh, ok. (giggle)

TS: So we had a relationship back in the eighties.

ET: (giggle)

TS: That was back 1985-86 season.

ET: Wow.

TS: Can you hit pause real quick?

ET: Yeah.

TS: Tri-pod. Media Services called. I just told them that...

Chelsea: Yeah I got the email.

TS: So, I told them then you'd send it.

Chelsea: Um, did you get my email?

TS: Sorry about that interruption.

ET: It's ok. Um, what differences did you see between BYU and Ricks College when you coached there?

TS: BYU and Ricks? Probably the biggest main difference is business. When you go from Junior College to Division 1 level you're much more business oriented. And then your job is strictly basketball in Division 1. I was 92% coaching and 8% teaching. And then here at Ricks I was like 80% teaching and 20% coaching. My salary is paid for here just by teaching classes here. But I mean there I was able to concentrate on recruiting and practice, team organization, and budgets. Not that we didn't do those things here. But the emphasis was just much more on business than winning and losing. There you go.

ET: How about the attitudes of the girls or guys, whoever you worked with?

TS: The attitudes, there was even a difference, a little bit I think, between the... between the athletes that are you know obviously higher caliber skilled payers, but sometimes, not all the time, you know, but sometimes the players egos would even be that much more, um... their egos would be... higher if you want to say higher. They thought that they were maybe better than the rest and believed it and were even more confident in some ways. But yet there's kids just as humble as any other kids get. I don't know if spoiled's the right word... but... you know... they had more money, so they had, were able to do more things, travel, hotel, where we stayed and do different things. And so sometimes

kids take things for granted a little bit more than kids that are at a smaller school where they don't have as much money you know... but the kids are basically a lot the same because they have the same beliefs. The atmosphere's the same in both, both places. And I think that was good. The campus is so big in Provo that you hardly get to know everybody. Whereas here, of course Ricks is getting so big now it's getting harder to know everybody here too, you know. But you still have a chance to, bump, you get a chance to bump into people a lot more frequent than in Provo.

ET: Where were you when the announcement was made that Ricks would turn to a four year college?

TS: I was in Provo at the time. And we were having uh... (whistle) what were we doing? I was in the Smith field house doing something up there on campus when I heard about it. "Hey did you hear that they just dropped their sports program?" I said, "What?" I just thought it was rumor, you know. I didn't, you know, I hadn't heard it officially. And, that's where I first heard it.

ET: So, what was your initial reaction to that?

TS: My initial reaction was "Whoa!" My colleagues, friends, coaches that were here coaching here at Ricks, I thought, "Whoa! What are they going to do for their jobs now?" That was my first initial reaction. Then, "What about, what about the student athletes that go to Ricks College? What are they going to do with scholarship opportunities and to play, the opportunity to play here and go on?" And uh, 'cause I did that. All my brothers came here and participated in athletics and my friends. And those are some of my first initial reactions besides the community, you know. Watching and it affects it you know I think that, you know there's not a ton of things in Rexburg, Idaho going on as it is so you know the community is gonna be hurt a little bit by it. That was my first initial reaction.

ET: Why do you think that people were kind of shocked by it?

TS: Because Ricks had done so well, for one. And they're funded well. As far as funding, you know, Ricks College's strong, I think of anybody in the country. Private school, good solid sports program, good kids, you don't have people getting in trouble with the media, citizens in the community. It's just a stellar program. They finished nationally ranked in all their sports programs year after year after year. Probably one of the strongest junior college programs in the country, if not the strongest. Then to just drop the program's like whoa. You know. Why would they do that?

ET: Yeah. Have you seen any of those attitudes change?

TS: Uh huh.

ET: How?

TS: You know time is probably the biggest thing. Some people still don't understand it. The community, the people who, who understand it the best are the students. The students are learning it they're feeling it, you know, and they are moving on with their lives and there are still people in the community, they're still feeling sore over the whole thing. "I'll never come out and watch another game." You know, that kind of thing. And may not never, but they may have said that never initially, but I think a lot of them are curious to see what's going on up here. They hear what's going on and hear the student side of things and the opportunity to participate in those things they don't usually get to.

ET: Uh, huh. How did you get where you are now? How did you get the position you are in now?

TS: Well, I didn't seek after it. My... I was an assistant coach my last year in Provo. And it was actually a pretty good position because I didn't have the same pressures as the head coach that I had had the four years previous and it was... we had a good team coming back and you know it was sad and so forth. But I had people call from up here on campus and asked me to come down and at least look at it and in respect to those people who were so kind to me and I came down to, you know, campus to interview and see how things were on campus. And then the Spirit started working with me and a month later I decided to come up.

ET: Wow!

TS: It was neat. It happened in the summer. That previous summer before the activities got started.

ET: Whoo. So what kind of work goes into... or what kind of work does your position entail, like what do you have to do?

TS: You know I'm the athletic director, so to speak, over all of the athletics. Intercollegiate athletics, which is in the physical silo in the activities program. Pretty big job description. Activities is the umbrella that we are underneath, then there's the physical, we're underneath the physical, which includes fitness and outdoors, intramurals and athletics. And, so what was your question again?

ET: I was just asking what your position entails, like what do you have to do?

TS: Yeah, I'm the athletic director over that, and then I'm the sports manager over basketball.

ET: Ok.

TS: And what it entails is just a, I have an athletics council that I meet with each week. Then I have an athletic director and they have an athletic board underneath them that I meet with each week <interruption>. And I have a basketball coordinator that I meet with each week and I have student coaches that I meet with each week and a clinic that we put

on each week and an official's clinic that we put on each week, besides all my other administrative meetings with the physical silo. So it keeps me busy and on the go.

ET: He, he. Do you know how...?

TS: Then teams and coaches (laughing) working with individual coaches, individual players and their practices.

ET: Yeah, that's a lot of work. Do you know how the idea for this new program came up?

TS: Well, you know when they dropped the athletic program they kind of left it up to the administration. They still left the funding there. They felt like there was a need for it still. So when they said that they dropped the program they didn't really drop it. They still kept it going you know on campus, with teams on campus. Intercollegiate, is the term we use right now. And, and the idea of the whole thing. President Hall, Garth Hall, who's the Vice President now, he was the athletic director previous. And he spoke at our morning side this, this year. It was interesting to get his comments, you know, on the whole thing. It was, you know, it just came right up. He heard it announced, that they were going to have a meeting twenty-four hours in advance and went to the meeting and found out about it.

ET: Yeah.

TS: You know so... after that, Davenshaw was invited to be the new activities program director. He was involved here. Lori Woodland was who asked me on board here as far as the committee in hiring sports managers to come in. And obviously they had a lot of pre-thought and a trying to get people to come here and what they wanted to do in the program. But we kinda developed it as we... the new sports managers that came on and myself... Troy Docherty, Phillip Crane, Justin Garner, Doug Stutz, and Peter Stilling... and we've also hired another gal named Nikki Ogden who does a little bit of outdoors, she'll still have outdoors but she's going to do volleyball now with our expanding. Troy Docherty was doing a little of volleyball and football at the same time and it was a little too much.

ET: Yeah.

TS: But anyways, some of those people were already on campus. Doug Stutz was the cross country track coach. Peter Stilling was working in, as the soccer club team supervisor so to speak. And Justin Garner was already here kind of as a... he was already helping out with track and field and helped out with administrative duties in the athletic department previous to dropping. But Troy, Phil, and myself were all new or coming back into the program.

ET: Do you know how many students are involved this year?

TS: Well this semester we have about 430. Fall semester... are we just talking about January to January? Is that what you're kinda looking for?

ET: Yeah, sure.

TS: Last fall we had about 492-93 athletes. In the summer we had 400 in both first and second summer terms. Now some of those student athletes are dual. They'll play more than one in different semesters. But in our first year we had over 1,000 kids, individual kids who were involved in athletics. And uh, that was from fall 2002 to, to December 2003. Like 1,043 individual athletes involved in the program.

ET: Just athletes?

TS: Just in the athletics program.

ET: Ok. So does that include all of the managers, the game people, the referees and all that?

TS: No. That would just be the athletes themselves. Athletes and coaches. And then, you know, during the course of this next year, I'm sure we're going to surpass that. Like I said we had 500, almost 500 in the summer and we have 430 now, and some of those are dual, planning on participating in the fall and so we'll figure out these numbers during the summer. So it might be around 1,200 athletes maybe; that's my guesstimate for our second year. There's a point though where we'll probably peak out because of facilities you know, and then offering sports support. You have to look all those things... and interest. You know we're trying to get as many people involved as we can and following the Spirit and the same time to know whether or not we should keep or not keep.

ET: What are the goals that you see for the program?

TS: My biggest goals, as far as going along with this is... it might go along with Elder Eyring's talk that he gave... were that we help build testimonies of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We're not so worried about the wins and losses but the leadership opportunities that go hand in hand with this. It's hands on experience for student coaches and teams to just, it's just wonderful opportunities to grow and develop. On the educational, academic side, you know we involve them as well. Aside from the athletes we have other people that are involved with the program to help them progress in their degrees and leadership opportunities too. On our athletics council there are student's that aren't participating that are getting opportunities to stand out in marketing or the athletic media services is doing high light films and they're doing review services.

ET: Like real life jobs.

TS: Yeah. Like ESPN you know. So those kinds of things is what we get.

ET: How much time do you spend away from your family now compared to when you were a coach?

TS: Well, I don't travel, you know, near as much. And so for all the travel and stuff, I was on the road a lot more you know.

ET: Yeah.

TS: Time wise. But I still spend a lot of time away from home. A lot of my evenings and weekend. But then during the season I was that way too. But this is year round. We've got, every semester we've got it going. It's hard to find that balance, I'm still trying to figure that out. You know when to take vacation, when not to. Because every semester is really important. I don't mean to express the importance of athletics than home. I think the hardest is probably winter semester though because we've got basketball going during that. I have the most games and coaches besides being an athletic director so this time of year's my busiest.

ET: Do you... how much pressure and stresses do you feel as being one of the people that pretty much started the program?

TS: I don't know if you call it pressure but you know we're really taking it as a pioneering opportunity. We've done something... we're really, you know we're still granted money to continue on advancing, you know to buy uniforms and equipment and stuff for our teams and using the building. And, even though we dropped athletics, I don't feel the pressure that, lets just say on wins and losses... in athletics there's pressure on wins and losses. What I feel on my shoulders is are we training? Are we giving students the opportunity to grow and develop the way the Savior would have us do? When the Prophet made the final call, he made the final decision to drop the program, his thoughts were, I'm sure he talked to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and what can we do to make these students and give them the opportunity to grow and develop for the future. We give lots of students the opportunity to grow and be leaders in the church and be a haven. Where Satan abounds throughout the land, students can come and be a part of a program that's not part of it and learn and grow and develop. Kind of like the missionary training center but we're doing it through athletics you know. President Bednar mentioned that in a talk in January.

ET: He said that. Missionary training center?

TS: Yeah. Disciple... in fact we're going to have a meeting today we're going to talk about that. Starts right now, yeah.

ET: Ok one last question.

TS: You bet.

ET: Do you see the school ever turning back to the old program?



TS: You know, I never say never because you just never know. The way it's going it's a wonderful thing. The only way it would change is if the Prophet came back and said, "Ok we're gonna have athletics again and we're traveling off campus." Then I would believe it at that point. Otherwise we're going to continue on like we're doing right now. It's been a wonderful thing.

ET: Yes, it is. Well, thank you very much.

TS: Yeah, did I help you out?

ET: Yeah, you bet.

TS: Great.

ET: Alright, thank you.

TS: Thank you.