

We delighted to announce another addition  
to the Track and Field Clinic

# Chad Gunnelson



Chad Gunnelson is in his 3rd year leading Augustana College as Director of Track & Field and Cross Country in 2025-26.

He made an immediate impact on the program in his first season, showing his ability to lead and build programs. The Augustana women elevated from 6th place in the prior season to earn a team runner-up finish in 2024 at the CCIW Outdoor Championships, their best finish since 2008. Augustana women won the 100, 200, 800, steeplechase, 5K, and 10K at the championships, almost sweeping the running events at home. In cross country, two individuals qualified for their first NCAA cross country national championships and five individuals qualified for the NCAA track & field championships. The season was capped off with four all-American performances and an NCAA national champion in the discus, (Charlotte Frere – Preemption, Ill, Sherard HS). A total of six school records were broken throughout the year. All four teams earned USTFCCCA All-Academic honors in his inaugural season. Both the women's cross country and track & field teams set new program records for team GPA with a 3.763 and 3.557 respectively. The men also performed well with GPAs of 3.281 for cross country and 3.246 for track & field. A priority and emphasis in Gunnelson's programs has been first year academic performance and they thrived in 2023-2024 with over 30 first-year Vikings earning a 3.525 GPA, averaging on the Dean's List.

The 2024-25 season brought more historic milestones under Gunnelson's leadership. The women's track & field team finished 5th at the NCAA Championships, the highest in school history, while the men's cross country team returned to NCAA competition for the first time in nine years. Throughout the season, the team saw 25 new school records and 65 all-time top-10 marks. Fifteen athletes earned All-American honors, 19 captured conference championships, and all four teams earned USTFCCCA All-Academic recognition. The women's track & field program set a new GPA record at 3.575, and more than 55 student-athletes achieved Dean's List recognition. The season capped off with Frere winning her second straight national title in the discus. All nine student-athletes who traveled to the NCAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships earned All-American status.

Prior to Augie, Gunnelson spent 12 years at University of Dubuque, leading UD to their first ever and back-to-back indoor conference titles, their first outdoor championship in over 60 years and two NCAA

top-10 finishes. While head cross country coach at UD, the Spartan women experienced their highest conference finish in school history and the men placed highest in over 30 years. Gunnelson claimed conference Coach of the Year honors in 2014, 2017, 2018, 2022 and was named Region Coach of the Year by the United States Track and Field Cross Country Coaches Association in 2017, 2018, and 2022. Throughout his tenure, the Spartans have re-written the record books, breaking nearly 100 different school records in both track & field and cross country.

In 2022, the Spartan men won the American Rivers outdoor conference championship to claim their first outdoor title in 61 years. In 2019, the Spartans achieved their best collective performance on the national stage, with both men's and women's programs competing for their share of top 10 team finishes at the NCAA Championships. In 2018, the teams completed their best collective conference efforts as the Spartan men claimed their second straight Iowa Conference Championship indoors, a runner-up finish outdoors, the best in over 50 years at that time, and the women set a program record for points at the outdoor championships with 150.33 points.

Additionally, during Gunnelson's time, the Spartans earned 76 All-America honors, 8 NCAA runner-ups, had 2 NCAA leaders and 4 NCAA titles. The Spartans crowned 160 conference champions, earning more than 400 all-conference (top 3) honors, and saw 652 new marks on the top-10 all time list at Dubuque. Gunnelson's teams also excelled off the track and course as well earning consistent USTFCCCA All-Academic honors including the highest team GPA in the nation for women's cross country in 2015. In 2021 and 2022, each freshman class earned a first semester GPA over 3.5 to start their college careers. Beyond the arena and classroom, the track & field team earned the inclusive excellence award from University of Dubuque's Multicultural Center and logged hundreds of hours of volunteer efforts in the community each year.

Prior to UD, Gunnelson, a native of Madison, Wis., spent six seasons as the head boy's and girl's track & field coach at Madison East High School. At East, he coached 22 school record holders and back-to-back state champions in 2010 and 2011. In his final year with the Purgolders, the team earned a 3.24 GPA, had four sectional champions, and placed all four state qualifiers on the podium at the WIAA state meet, including a state champion in the 400 meters.

Along with coaching, Gunnelson was the owner and CEO of Athletic Republic, a sports performance training facility, from 2007 to 2011 where he built Athletic Republic into the largest training facility in the Madison area that trained youth, high school, college, Olympians, and professional athletes in football, baseball, basketball, hockey.

Along with his duties with track & field and cross country at Augustana, Gunnelson also serves as Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Athletics Diversity & Inclusion Designee, and is a member of Strategic Plan Implementation Council. Outside of his duties at Augie, Gunnelson is actively involved in the sport of track & field beyond coaching. He serves as President on the USTFCCCA Division III Track & Field Executive Committee and is a member of the CCIW DEI Committee. He also leads FASST Track Club and FASST Flag Football, community sports programs that are the only programs to offer opportunities at the age groups they serve in the Dubuque area.

Gunnelson currently holds USTFCCCA Specialist Certifications in jumps, endurance, and strength & conditioning. He holds a USATF Level 1 certification and Level 2 sprints, hurdles, relays certification as well. Along with track & field coaching, Gunnelson is a member and certified strength and conditioning specialist (CSCS) with the National Strength & Conditioning Association, a certified performance coach with USA Weightlifting, and certified in the Functional Movement Screen.

Gunnelson speaks at coaching clinics around the country, coaches at various camps, and has been selected to present at the USTFCCCA National Convention multiple times. He also instructs the USTFCCCA Track & Field Technical Certification course.

He resides in Dubuque, Iowa with his family – wife, Melissa, children, Taylor, Evan and Dash, and their 2 dogs.