



Presentation to Coach Pat Gahagan on 50 years as a club member - 17th May 2024

The club took the opportunity at the Cross Country Awards evening to recognise the 50 years service as a club member of Pat Gahagan as a young athlete, senior and for the past 30 year or more as successful endurance coach.

Club Chairman Martin Chester said "What can I say about the man who I now have the pleasure of helping to firstly recognize, but more importantly to thank him for 50 years (Yes 50 years !) of fantastic service to Havering Athletic Club. He was a fine athlete himself back in the day, but most of you will know Pat nowadays as certainly one of our finest and long standing coaches, and also a mentor to many of the athletes. I do know that these words can't even begin to do his commitment justice, so thank you again on behalf of Havering AC. But firstly, can we have a thoroughly deserved big clap for **Pat Gahagan**. Now over to Pat himself to say a few words.

The Club membership records show that Pat joined on 11 April 1974 but in his response Pat recalled that he may have started earlier as his teacher told him to turn up and speak to coach Stan Berrett. In those days athletes paid their track fees to a member of the Council staff in the office by the changing rooms and the fee was just 5p per session. Pat said: "This has always been a family club and six of the eight in my family competed for the club, five of us represented Essex, and five of my six nieces and nephews have competed for the club, and three of us met our spouses through the sport."

Pat's long service has seen the stadium track change from a cinder surface to an all-weather track in 1977, which was resurfaced in 2004, and is due to be resurfaced again next year. His career saw him race in the young athletes leagues, the Southern league and British Men's League. Reflecting on his past 30 years as a coach at events from 400m to Marathon which has seen him coach athletes to international level Pat concluded "It has been great seeing the club grow in all events and at all levels with the very good level of coaches and athletes that we have now. As you may have gathered, I like it here!"

