



Retirement of Coach Dave Naylor

Havering AC middle distance coach Dave Naylor has decided that the time is right to hang up his whistle and stop watch after over 50 years of top-level coaching.

After joining Hornchurch Harriers as a young athlete in 1956, Dave's successes as an athlete included winning the Essex youth's cross championship in 1960 before he enlisted in the Army as a Royal Engineer the following year. He became a qualified physical education instructor and trained the Corps to their first regimental championship for many years but his career was cut short in 1968 when an accident in Germany left him paralysed in all four limbs, leading to his medical discharge from the Army, aged just 23.

His determination saw him recover sufficiently enough to return to Hornchurch Stadium and in 1969 he began his coaching career with the recently formed Havering Athletic Club. Starting with just one athlete, his sister Trish, he soon formed a successful coaching group and his achievements saw him crowned Havering Sports Personality of the Year in 1970. Dave supplemented his coaching expertise by attending elite training camps and he also drew on his army PE knowledge of circuit training and mobility exercise to the benefit of his group.

His first international success came in 1973 when Lesley Kiernan (now Foley) won 800m silver for Great Britain in the European Junior Championships. Dave went on to coach a regular stream of numerous others to national medals at the English Schools and other championships, earning international vests at junior and senior level, the most recent being Faye Fullerton and Lauren Deadman.

At local level the athletes that he has coached have achieved success, winning too many individual and team medals to count at county and regional levels. They have formed the backbone of the strong Havering Borough teams in the London Mini Marathon, with multiple winners of this annual event since it first started over 30 years ago.

All this has been achieved despite the disabilities caused by his major injury, which unfortunately have limited his visits to the track and competitions and have progressively affected his health in recent years. His younger sister Sue Deane, herself a coach and Committee member at Havering AC, said "Dave has inspired so many athletes and coaches. I am there at the club because of Dave and our family have admired his strength and courage throughout the years. He always had a calm encouraging manner but with a kind of magic which is hard to describe and which gets the best out of his athletes. He has done this so selflessly despite his health constraints which he has managed so well over the years."

To recognise his long and important contribution to Havering AC his sister Sue presented Dave with a gift on behalf of the club Committee to mark his well-earned retirement. He will now be able to call on the assistance of "Alexa", in addition to his valuable support from his wife Eileen, who continues to coach at the club.



Dave Naylor and his coaching group c.1971



Dave Naylor receives Havering Sports Personality of the Year award 1970 from Ronnie Boyce



Dave Naylor with Katie Richardson & Megan Foley c2003



Sue Deane presents the gift to Dave on behalf of the Committee – July 2021

