

Frank Davies

Darlington's loss was the Club's gain when the 6ft 2in lean athlete from County Durham decided to settle in Liverpool.

Born on the 14th June 1945, he was brought up in Darlington and educated at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School. He ran the half-mile at school and won the Durham County Schools title at that distance in 1963. He competed regular at cross-country but felt he wasn't strong enough. In the same year he also won the Teesside Junior Time-Trial Championship on his bike. But he decided to concentrate on athletics and, on leaving school, joined Darlington Harriers, for whom he ran when at home from Liverpool University.

He graduated in 1967 and started his work as a Systems Analyst in Liverpool. He was so impressed with the way that Tom O'Mahoney ran Liverpool Harriers at the time that he joined immediately. Frank went on to represent the Club on the road, country and track, and was the back-bone of the highly successful Club road relay squad. Like Everton FC's star Howard Kendall, he was as close to an international appearance as he could have been without actually getting one.

By 1971 he had reached a good level in the Senior ranks, with some respectable times: 1min 52.9secs for 800m, 3mins 46.1secs for 1,500m, and 4mins 06.4secs for the mile. That year he won the Northern 1,500m at Derby in 3mins 51.4secs, ran a P.B. when representing Northern Counties at that event in the AAA Championships, and even won a silver medal as a late substitute in the Club's Northern Medley Relay team, running a 200 metres leg!

After a disappointing track season in 1972, when he was unable to improve his 1,500metres time, he moved up to 5,000 metres in 1973, and finished a close second in the Northern in 14mins 9.4secs. That August, at Farnworth in an invitation 3,000 metres (held in high wind and a hailstorm!), he left internationals Mike Tagg and Granville Tuck in his wake to win in 8mins 12.2secs, and take home a TV.

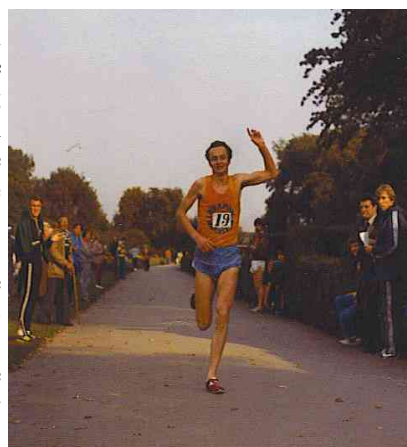
Frank was part of the Club's very first appearance in the Track & Field British League and went on to make thirty-three appearances over a period which lasted till 1987, with eleven in succession.

On the road he won many races, often showing his back to seasoned internationals. These races included local ones such as the Wallasey Festival '7', the Sutton '7', and the Birkenhead Park '5' (three times), plus others further afield such as the Batley '6', a hat-trick in the Salford '7', and two wins in both the Altrincham Linotype '5' and the Salford '5'. Two victories that gave him particular pleasure were in his native North East: the Gateshead '5½' (ahead of Mick McLeod) and the Redcar '10' (course record of 48:23). His final victory of note was the British Veterans Over-45 10km road race in 1990.

He was also had some successes at cross-country, winning the Liverpool & District and the West Lancs races, representing Lancashire and the Northern Counties, and being part of the Club's team that finished second in the National in 1975. He was fancied to win the British Veterans Cross-Country title in 1991, but serious injuries in a car crash a month before the event put a halt to serious running for over a year.

The tall, aggressive runner featured in the Club's road relay squad at national level for some 15 years, including three 6-stage AAA titles, and he ran the fastest individual lap of the AAA 6-stage in 1973. He often ran the anchor leg (the picture shows our victory in the Northern 6-Stage Relay at Wakefield in 1981), and many will remember the Northern 12-stage at Blackpool where he ran the last leg with a **red** vest, due to a nose bleed, but still got his team home to victory.

Frank never had a coach. He listened to all the 'experts', and studied the methods of the best coaches, especially the Australian Percy Cerutti who coached Herb Elliott ("The best-ever over mile or 1,500 metres", according to Frank). He also valued the advice of Olympic Steeplechaser John Jackson while at university, plus Club members Mike Turner and Pete Waddington over many years later. His record showed he didn't go far wrong, but no matter how he ran, he always thought he could have done better.



Married to Gill, with three grown-up children, he retired in 2003, and can still be seen most days walking through or around Calderstones Park, close to his home in the Allerton area.

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