



David Kates

Name: Dave Kates

Born: 1948

Date Joined : I think it was 1970

Personal Bests: Ah P.B's. They're important in the moment, particularly when you are young, because they are a measure of how well you are adapting to the training process. You know that, Bob Beamon & Jonathan Edwards aside however, that P.B's do not stand the test of time though. What matters is results against your peers in the era that you compete in.

First Club Race: Probably the annual Ilford Club Yacht Handicap Road run at Chigwell Row. For a couple of years I also ran Cross Country in the then Metropolitan League. Huge fields of 200 plus and tin baths to clean off afterwards. If you had a bad run you were treated to cold water & 5cms of mud in the bottom of your tin bath.

My first walking race was the Essex 20km Championship, I think it was 1972. I was disillusioned following a long period of injury. Roger Mills persuaded me to try Walking and I just turned up on the day with no training behind me, never walked before and not much idea of what I was doing. I did 124 minutes and everyone said I should give walking a try.

Favourite Race: European Masters 30km Championships, Monte Gordo, Portugal 2005. Air Temp was around 34C, no shade along the seafront there. Huge field, hundreds of spectators all around the course and in my age group in the first 6 we were knocking 7 bells out of one another the whole race. Raw enough to make you feel alive.

Notable Performances:

World Masters Champs 50km Gold. Auckland New Zealand 2004 *

World Masters Champs 30km Silver. Auckland New Zealand 2004 *

* These two races were 4 days apart. I plead temporary insanity.

European Masters Champs 30kms Bronze. Monte Gordo Portugal 2005

Centurion Badge 1995. 100 miles in 23hrs 20min 40secs.

Biggest Disappointment: Our demons are best kept hidden. In truth, nothing is wasted. Learn from every experience. There is always something you can take.

Typical Weeks Training at your peak .

Ah that one. The one where they say ' don't try this at home '. What I did is not important because you are not me. Can I say this. " If we do what we did yesterday, we will be beaten. If we do what others are doing



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then we can be competitive, we can be 'warrior'. If however we see and understand the science behind our event and we use it in a unique and innovative way. Then maybe, just maybe we can be Champion.

Favourite Sessions:

The one that ends with a cup of tea and me not saying 'That's it, I'm packing it in'.

More seriously you must ask yourself each time 'what am I looking to get from this session, where does it fit into the blueprint of what I am trying to build here'. Afterwards then question 'what did I get from that'. Probably pain! You have to visualise the journey ahead of you and ensure that each session you do is a legitimate payment toward that. Otherwise you are just playing around.

Favourite race distance : Well it was 30kms but as Fagin once said I'm reviewing the situation.

Favourite event - Track, Road or Cross Country : I prefer to compete on the Road but I like to watch Track & Field also.

What advice would you give our current crop of youngsters :

Enjoy it, listen to your trainer. Don't specialise too soon. Try as many events as you can to begin with, until you find what you enjoy most and what is right for you. General base fitness, agility, flexibility and elastic energy are first to reach for. Specialisation with Technical Coaching comes later probably when you are around 14 / 15. If you decide to stay with athletics, the view from the mountain top is a long climb. To the 'special one' reading this - you know who you are - GET HELP you can't do it on your own. Know this - 'the Champion is the one with the dominant mind'.

Who is the most Famous Athlete you Trained with or would like to train with: I've trained with Roger Mills and Arthur Thomson. I've also met and had the opportunity to talk with and learn from Robert Korzeniowski and Ronald Weigel.

How would you improve the sport : I'm too old & wise to answer that question.

Favourite Athlete or Sportsman: Mohammed Ali, Usain Bolt, Jose Mourinho & Graham Taylor. The last did not just build a football team, he built with it a Town Community. From my own sport I choose Robert Korzeniowski, Jefferson Perez and Ronald Weigel because they are serial winners. In sport the 'serial winner' is not just a Champion - they become Legend.

What other sports do you follow: Football. I was on the Youth Coaching Staff at Fulham FC for 3 years and I also worked for a time with Watford FC on their Schools & Community Coaching programmes. I held an F.A. Coaching Badge. I also have a UKA Coaching Licence with Level 3 for Race Walking, but it needs updating.

Really I like to watch any Team Sport and amongst other sports I like boxing, cycling, tennis & rowing.

Best Country Visited : New Zealand followed by Australia. I'm also very fond of Italy.



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Favourite Food & Drink : Christmas Dinner for the occasion and to be with my family. I also like a good pasta or a risotto.

Drink - I like a good red wine and any local English Ale.

Favourite TV Shows:

The Big Bang Theory.

Magnum

Line of Duty.

Hawaii Five 0

The Wire.

Dexter

Last Film Seen : At the Cinema - Downton Abbey (a treat for my wife)

Last Book Read : I have two on the go. Eat & Run – Scott Jurek also Natural Born Heroes – Christopher McDougall. I like autobiographies and a good thriller.

Favourite Band Singer: Needs thinking about. I'll settle for Annie Lenox.

Last Album Bought or Downloaded : David Bowie – Greatest Hits.

Last Concert Attended: Russell Watson. I had Jools Holland booked but that's been cancelled – thank you Covid 19.

Any Pets: Two dogs, a Lurcher and an Australian Kelpie. I've always kept dogs. They give unconditional love, keep me grounded and help me to forget whatever may be troubling me.

What are your aims for next season : With the present situation (Covid 19) in mind – just to have one. For the moment it's just to maintain a base level of condition & fitness that's sufficient to enable me to step things up quickly should the situation change. It does at least offer the opportunity to work on weaknesses without the pressure of competition. We have to try to turn obstacles into opportunities.

Tell us a Joke: Q : Why was 6 afraid of 7.

A : Because 7, 8, 9.



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David is on the right of all the following photos







DAVE ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS :-

For most, completing a 100 miles race leaves them “slowish” for many months as they get over it. You had an immediate post 100 “bad week”, then started winning several “1st Centurion” awards. How did you regain your speed so quickly?

Correct about the bad week. I was on crutches for 4 days.

Appearances are also deceptive, my body was not where it should be for several months afterwards. Just how do you prepare for a 100 mile race, particularly a first ever 100. If you think about it, preparing for the distance is not a practical proposition. ‘ Today we are going to do 8 x 100 mile with 7 minutes recovery —

Say what Coach. What’s that !!! ‘ That said there are those athletes that have a ‘ love affair ‘ with ultra events and indeed those that excel and specialise in them. If you complete enough



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of them then the races themselves effectively become your training and you will adapt better to the distance. The risk in doing that however is that your adaption to the 100 mile Event will then be just that and it might compromise your ability to race effectively over much shorter distances, for example 5k or 10k. Bags of endurance, but can't run for a bus. There are obvious exceptions to this and I would describe all of them as 'not just your average athlete'. For my part being in the best of health and getting myself into the best general physical condition was essential. Be in no doubt that if you're not, a race like that can kill you. On the Entry Form there was a Death Disclaimer. What was also crucial was to prepare my mind. I spoke with a number of athletes who had experience of 100 mile events and all warned me about the 'night'. Huge temperature drop, accelerated exhaustion due to being cold, the need for No 1 or No 2, pitch darkness – so dark you can't work out where you are, the need for sleep, isolation, your mind playing tricks as you slip between reality and something akin to dreaming and worst of all NO COCOA. I practised many weeks before on one Friday night by leaving work in East London around 6.30pm with a rucksack full of drink and goodies, following a route through the City, Holloway Rd, Highgate Hill & Village, before picking up the A41. I thought the drunken idiots turning out of the bars in Dodge City, I mean Watford, in the early hours of the morning would be my worst encounter, but then in a state of exhaustion I came upon the start of the Chiltern Hills. In my armchair around 4.30 am (with cocoa) having walked less than half a '100' I was reviewing the situation rather unfavourably. I decided I would train for the 100 by not training. If I'd attempted another of those overnight adventures beforehand I would have destroyed myself. In the race itself, as night fell I found myself walking for a couple of hours with a Dutch walker. Forgive me but I cannot remember his name, but he was in his middle 60's and one of the oldest in the race. He wore the type of hat favoured by the Dutch Boers and to record the 40 laps of 2.5 miles of Battersea Park London, he carried with him a knife and tally stick. At the end of each lap he made a notch. He always knew where he was. He told me that everyone will face a crisis. When it happens, go inside yourself. You will find something.

You coached and mentored Ilford AC star Scott Davies when he equalled the late Olympian Don Thomson's impressive record of winning 7 consecutive National 50 Kilometres' titles. What do you recall of the high's and lows from such a successful partnership?

If you look at a Painting by any of the Classic Masters, you will within it, see many different features, different colours, different use of light and shade, different perspectives and so on. If you focus too intently on just one or two of those, do you not lose a sense of the complete work. Personally I would much rather people look back on what Scott achieved



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(because it was a lot more than those 7 National 50k titles) in the context of a journey that led to him laying down a complete piece of work which I hope will now be seen as a triumph. It was a privilege to work with Scott and I will always be grateful that he gave me that opportunity.

It's well known you're a Watford FC season ticket holder. How much have you missed not being at the matches?

Well football is a game for the people, a tribal game of heroes and villains, a game of passion and excitement, a game to allow us to escape to the terraces to give life to our raw emotions. It draws people and communities together. Those of you that have experienced that electric atmosphere generated by a tense, tight game in a packed stadium will know what I'm talking about. Did anyone see the Spurs v West Ham game. West Ham coming back from 3-0 down and Lanzini hitting that rocket equaliser with 30 secs remaining. Even in an empty stadium you could sense the emotion, imagine that in front of 60,000 spectators. TV doesn't quite cut it, does it.

What made you pick race walking over running ?

Once upon a time it was winter. I came inside from the cold, sat by the fire and put my slippers on. I was immediately comfortable. The race walking community is a very welcoming family.

Have you ever done any running races ? If so, which ?

I came into athletics from football, having done some running at school. In those days at Ilford the calendar was, cross - country over the winter, road runs & road relays in the spring and then track & field during the summer months. For a couple of years I did all of those but my track races were mostly limited to graded races over 800 / 1500. I was a decent runner at school but after that I continued growing, got heavier and was no longer suited to middle distance running. I switched to walking after a prolonged period of running injuries.

Some of your answers are very philosophical ? Why is that ?

I've been around the block. Will it help if I worry about things I can't change, things I can't undo or control. People are who they are and some things in life are what they are. What matters is what you see in the mirror. A couple of years ago a street beggar in Madrid told me that to be great in this World, all that is needed is a humble heart. I think about that.



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Ever Done ParkRun ?

No but I think that they are an excellent idea. Grass root & mass participation sport & recreation at its best. There is little formality and anyone, whatever their fitness level, can simply turn up and give it a try. The thing with mass participation sport is that the cream always rises to the top, so Park Run may be a good fishing ground for talent too. In any event the essence of it is that people are brought together to simply enjoy themselves without performance level pressure

Happiest moment in your race walking life ?

There isn't one, because it's a journey of many happy moments. I don't want to focus on this bit or that bit. I would rather look at it as a ' Painting ' or a complete piece. It's been extraordinary in the making. It has taken me to countries all over the World where I have met some extraordinary people, made friendships and had some fantastic experiences. You realise after a while that it's not any particularly medal or performance that's enriched your life. It's the ' Painting ' when you see it as a whole.

What are your thoughts of International Race Walker Tom Bosworth and how do you feel he will perform in next Years Olympics ?

He's a World Class athlete and his performances place him amongst the greatest of British Race Walkers. He has also been very successful in raising the profile of our sport through TV and other media and his exploits have had people here in Britain actually talking about race walking. He is an example of what commitment, dedication and many years of hard work can achieve and a great role model for our sport. Part of his legacy will be that ' somewhere out there ' are Young British kids that will be drawn into race walking because of Tom Bosworth. Does he have the credentials for a great performance in Tokyo - absolutely. I hope the stars align for him.

Do you keep in touch with any people you used to compete/train with at the club or from other clubs?

Yes. All of us at Ilford stay in contact with each other. The race walking community as a whole is also very close knit. Everyone knows everyone, so you will develop a wide circle of friends, perhaps even extending internationally.

Your 2 events at the World Masters are very impressive, both in terms of



achievement and distance. With only 4 days break between the 2 can you remember how you recovered. Was it complete rest between the 2 events?

You can't recover in 4 days. No one can, so you have to prepare on that basis. The World Masters Road Championships in Auckland, New Zealand were a little unique in that the Walks programme included events over 10k, 30k and 50k. To my knowledge the 50k Event had not been tried before in Masters Championships and it has not been included on the programme again since 2004. The World Masters presently have their longer Walking Event as 20k although the European Masters do still retain the 30k Event. In Auckland very few walkers competed in all three events and most either did a 10/30k or a 30/50k combination. My approach to the 30/50k double was to accept that it was impossible to recover in between and therefore treat the two as if they were one event that had two stages. In training I put emphasis on endurance against external resistance with many long duration sessions on a specific heart rate. Out here the Chiltern Hills are best described as 'brutal' and perfect for that. Too much of that type of work however will compromise both your cadence and stride length if it's done to the exclusion of everything else. I therefore sought flatter terrain for sessions where I was seeking to improve power. To illustrate this, if for example you are working through a fartlek session over an undulating course with many steep hills than you introduce the factor of external resistance which will break up your rhythm. Your fartlek session will take on the nature of endurance rather than intervals and you won't be getting from it what you think you are. Another consideration was logistics. It's pointless training hard for 6 months or more, only to have everything go 'pear shaped' on the eve of your race because of poor logistics. I took nearly a week getting out to New Zealand, stopping off for a few days in Bangkok and we also had a short stop in Sydney where I slept. I did not train on the way out. We arrived in Auckland I think about 4/5 days beforehand and I think 2 days prior, I did one training session of about 20 minutes with Laurie Dordoy. This 'decompression' approach if you will, was to overcome the effect of travelling through several time zones and to try and arrive fresh. Others went straight out in one hop with just a few hours stop over in Sydney Airport, arriving barely one or two days beforehand and even trained the same night they arrived. The night before the 30k I happened to find myself in the hotel elevator with one of my European rivals. I looked at his face and he looked like crap through jet lag. I knew he had 'no chance'. In the 30k I finished 2nd to Andrew Jameison of Australia who had already won the 10k. What an athlete, he was simply just different class and deservedly won the Athlete of the Championships Award. In his late 50s he was still walking something around 94 minutes for 20k and in New Zealand he finished the 30k in 2hrs38m. I could not live with that and he was a distance ahead but I count it as a privilege to have been in that race with him and to have shared the podium. In the closing stages of that race I suffered sudden cramp but just about got over the line. The following day my left



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hamstring tightened severely and despite treatment I had doubts about the 50k. Then I heard that Andrew had had to return suddenly to Australia. The reason I'm not sure of but I felt for him because it seemed a cruel twist. Bar a mishap befalling him I could not have beaten him in that 50k. The stars it seemed might be aligning for me and I had to start that race. I spent the time until then getting treatment and just resting. I'd discussed strategy for that 50k with Colin Young before leaving for New Zealand. He suggested that I should sit back for 25/30k and let the others push it if they want. A 50k race so soon after the 30k is a big ask. He thought that there was going to be drama, with the wheels coming off of them all in the later stages. He was right. They just fell away in front of me as I came through. I was not the quickest, but it turned out that I was the strongest. No one finished in front of me.

Favourite Watford player?

John Barnes. More recently Gerard Deulofeu.

We have a young kid just broken into the 1st Team – Joao Pedro. Look out for him, I think he is going to be great.

Ever been disqualified in a race walk? The rules seem incredibly complex to me?

Yes. What's it like ? Well as Mike Tyson would say. ' Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth '. More seriously I'd like to address this question from the perspective of a young, new or novice race walker who might be nervous and need reassurance about how the seemingly strict rules of race walking are applied and the role of judges in that. The judges are there to ensure fair competition and help each walker to finish the race with good technique. They will do that if you take notice of what they are indicating to you by way of caution through the ' paddle system '.

Take heart if you do suffer the unfortunate experience of disqualification. You will be indicated the reason why and certainly most of our judges are approachable after the event and will readily advise what you can do to improve. You should also know that just because you get disqualified in one race, it does not mean that you are certain to suffer the same fate in the next race or the one after that. Most disqualifications are caused through fatigue issues. In any sport, not just race walking, when you are tired the first thing that goes is your technique. Most DQ's come about because of (a) Injury or physical impairment. You may not be completely rehabilitated from injury. (b) It may be early in the season and the walker may not have reached peak fitness & condition but tries to race as if they have. (c) the walker is placed in a level of competition that is beyond their present development or capability. They simply get dragged along to fast. I think that the last one highlights how



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important it is for young or novice walkers to be protected and given time to perfect their technique and develop without being hurried too early into the pressure of high level competition.

You obviously enjoy football. Did you play much when you were younger?

Yes, I played at youth or junior level but did not progress into pro football. I secured a good position with an International Bank in London (the same Bank that Olympic Champion Jared Tallent and a number of Australian Cricketers including Dennis Lillee worked for) so I did not try to follow a pathway into semi - pro football. I remember playing in different School sides with both Roger Cross and Bob Glozier both of whom went on to play for the West Ham Youth Team. Bob Glozier was the best I ever played with. A brilliant Defender who was Captain of England School Boys. He was seen by West Ham as the natural successor to Bobby Moore and yes he was that good. Sadly as he was about to break into the 1st Team his career was cut down and finished suddenly by a dreadful injury. If my memory serves me correctly he is mentioned by Trevor Brooking in his Autobiography. A great pity and devastating to all of us that knew him. Roger Cross I think was eventually transferred to Brentford. Back in those days most of the London Districts and the London Pro Clubs entered their Youth Teams in a Competition called the London Senior Cup. I remember playing for an East Ham Youth Team and losing 3-0 against Millwall FC. I also remember playing in the same Competition in a mid - week game against Silvertown under floodlights at The Terence McMillan Stadium, Newham. The then Chelsea Manager, Dave Sexton was in attendance with his Coaching Staff to ' scout ' the match. I scored our 2nd goal but it did not buy me a Contract. At least I had the honour of scoring in front of Dave Sexton.

Well that concludes my trip down memory lane. Hope you enjoyed the ride.