

Claude Berube

Claude is a well-known figure on the Winnipeg road running scene, not to mention track and cross-country. He started his career in Grade 10 at College St. Boniface, coached by Julien Lavergne and then Alphonse Bernard. He ran cross-country and track in addition to playing volleyball and soccer. By his senior year in high school, Claude was among the fastest in the Province both in Cross-country and track, medaling in provincials in both. He then competed for U of MB for his 5 years of eligibility over a 6 year span and began his teaching career at Golden Gate Junior High in 1986. There, he had a star athlete named Dean Gurney, and he became Dean's coach at Golden Gate and then at Silver Heights (as it then was), and on to the U of MB. By then, Dean had introduced some of his running friends to Claude as their coach and they all joined with Pacesetter Athletics, a club run by the late Ron Melnichuk. They trained hard together and produced some excellent runners.

In 1993, Claude became an assistant coach and became Head Coach in 1997 the track coach at U of MB, where he has worked as an Instructor II and coach ever since. He has developed many excellent athletes over those 28 years, including his son, Simon, and has been a key figure in the development of track and running programs in Manitoba through that period. He had supplemented his track and cross-country work as an athlete with road running almost throughout his running career, and he has encouraged his athletes to follow a similar path, at least during the part of the season that does not conflict with the prime track competitive season.

In his own running career, Claude had many significant achievements as a road runner. As an 18 year old, he finished in the top 10 in an elite field in the Tribune 10 km, finishing under 32 minutes, and passing Larry Switzer in the final stretch. Given Larry's storied career as a runner, that was a proud achievement for Claude. He competed in races from the 5 km to the half marathon, participating in virtually every race that the MRA had to offer in one year or another. He placed first in the Manitoba Marathon half marathon 3 or 4 times in the early to mid-1980's. Claude trained with such notables as Chris Webber, Henry Klassen and Rob Guy. He proudly remembers beating Chris McCubbins once in a 5 km, out-kicking him. McCubbins was not amused and stomped Claude in the next race at Grand Beach.

Claude's fastest 5 km on the roads was 14:40. His best in the 10 km was 30:30, a time not often seen in this area in recent years. He did a 15 km in 46 minutes and change, and the Bird's Hill 20 km in 64 minutes as a junior. He did the Gimli 10

mile race in 51:30 and his fastest half was 1:08:11 in 1985 in the Manitoba Marathon. The Manitoba Marathon was his favourite of all the events to participate in, whether in the half or the relay.

One of Claude's worst experiences as a road racer was the one time he attempted the Manitoba full marathon. There was a prize for running under 2:40 and he was on pace for that at 20 miles when the Wall reared its ugly head. It was one of the few races he ever failed to finish after starting. The experience did not make him want to try it again!

Claude has some of his U of M athletes, including Simon, training for the road season this year. They have done a time trial 5 km in 14:30. Current leaders beware!

Claude has done a tremendous amount for the road running program and community over almost the entire history of the MRA, and deserves our most sincere recognition. Not bad for a French Canadian kid!