

BOB COOK

Athlete

Bob Cook was one of Manitoba's top distance runners in track, X-country and road running from the late '70's to the early '90's, probably best known for his unyielding toughness and thundering gait.

Early in his career, coached by Don Breakey, Bob won the 1975 provincial high school 1500 m and 3000 m. After that, he joined the Yellow Snow Athletic Club, and ran X-country and track for the University of Manitoba. In 1977, coached by Chris McCubbins, he finished 3rd at the Canada Summer Games (5000 m), 2nd at the Canadian Junior Championships (5000 m), and 4th in both the Canadian University X-Country (10 km) and Prairie X-Country (12 km) Championships. That was followed, in 1978, by a 5th place finish in the Montreal Commonwealth Games Trials 10000 m and 2nd in the Islendingadagurinn 10 mile.

Bob stopped training in late 1978 in depression over his father's sudden death. However, he returned to serious competition, highly motivated, in early 1981, finishing 3rd in the national indoor 3000 metres, 3rd in the Puma Series 15 km, 2nd in the Trib Run for Fun and 1st in the Manitoba Championships 5000 m. Then, in the autumn, he won both the Manitoba and Prairie X-Country Championships.

Subsequent career highlights include, in chronological order: 1983 - Western Canada Games 10000 m (1st); 1984 - national indoor 3000 m (2nd), World X-Country Championships (125th, 4th Canadian), national 20 km road race (1st), Dallas White Rock Marathon (3rd); 1986 - Tom Longboat/National Championship 10 km (3rd), America's Marathon, Chicago (24th, 2:19:10); 1989 - Maseru 7 km, Lesotho, Africa (2nd).

At the local level, Bob won 16 out of 28 road races, finishing 2nd seven times and 3rd three times, typically running 10 km in under 31 minutes. He won several races multiple times: Islendingadagurinn (3), Athlete's Wear (3), Birds Hill (2) and Kenora (2). Chronic Achilles tendonitis ended his racing career in 1993, although he made sporadic 'comebacks' in his 40's and 50's while living overseas (UAE and England).

Bob's best times on the track were 1:57.5 (800 m), 3:52.32 (1500 m), 8:09.95 (3000 m), 14:14.85 (5000 m), and 29:48.94 (10000 m). On the roads, he ran 30:03 (10 km), 45:11 (15 km, possibly short), 49:52 (10 miles), 62:15 (20 km), 65:53 (half marathon) and 2:19:10 (marathon).

2023 MANITOBA RUNNERS' ASSOCIATION ROAD RUNNING HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

